EXCLUSIVE: NEW SHORT STORY FOR A CHRISTMAS BY PAUL THEROUX INTHE THURSDAY REVIEW

Black Christmas for Blair as Mandelson and Robinson quit





TONY BLAIR was reeling last night from his worst crisis since hecoming Prime Minister after the resignations of Peter Mannd Geoffrey Robinson, twelf his senior ministers.

Mr Mandelson, one of Mr Blair's closest friends and allies, stunned the political world by quitting as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry over the £373,000 personal loan he took from the millionaire Mr Rohinson to help him to huy a £475,000 house in Notting Hill, west London, in 1996.

Three hours later Mr Robinsnn resigned as Paymaster-General. He had already decided to stand down after Sistmas because of a string nt disclosures about his business affairs before he became a Treasury minister. But he brought forward his announcement as Mr Mandelson became engulfed in controver-

The loss of Mr Mandelson is a devastating setback to the

RESIGNATION, at least it had a touch of class. One of

Peter Mandelson's most valu-

able assets has always been to

judge where a story is going,

and yesterday he used it once

1:1:111

the principal architects of New Labour. Cabinet ministers fear Mr Blair's image will be tarnished by his departure and that he will will badly miss Mr Mandelson's advice on political strategy. Mr Blair was told by Mr Mandelson he felt wretched

and angry with himself. Mr Mandelson hopes he has limited the damage by resigning 48 hours after details of the loan emerged. But ministers fear further damaging revelatinns about Mr Rohinson's financial links with Gordon

Brown, the Chancellor. Mr Robinson is believed to have funded Mr Brown's Commons office in the run-up to last year's general election, and the Tories will table questions over their relationship when Parliament returns next month, as they step up attacks on "cronyism" at the heart of the Blair administration.

hoped Mr Mandelson would return to his government one day, telling him in a letter that

he believed that, in the future. "you will achieve much, more

One option would be for Mr Mandelson to run Labour's campaign at the general election, possibly as party chairman. But he is thought unlikely to win back a cabinet post until he has won re-election in his Hartlepool constituency.

Mr Blair told Mr Mandelson: "It is no exaggeration to say that, without your support and advice, we would never have built New Labour."

The Prime Minister sought to stabilise his government last night hy appointing two of Mr Mandelson's fellow modernisers to cabinet posts. The new Trade Secretary is Stephen Byers, already in the Cabinet as Chief Secretary to the Treasury. That post goes to Alan Milburn. the Health Minister, who wins promotion to the

Mr Blair made clear that he are seen as the "Blair and Brown" of their generation.

INSIDE

■ Relief and sadness at departures

■ Why Mandelson gave up the fight ■ Millionaire who wanted to help

■ Unanswered questions over loan page 5

■ David Aaronovitch Review, page 3

Review, page 3 ■ Leading article

They both entered the Commons in 1992 and, like the in his head about how the link Prime Minister and the Chanwould look to outsiders. cellor eight years earlier,

shared an office at Westminster. An emotional Mr Mandelson who said he loved his job at the Department of Trade and Industry, insisted last night that be had not broken the law or the rules on the conduct of ministers. But he admitted he had made "a lapse of judgement" in Mr Byers and Mr Milhurn taking the loan and not telling DTI officials about it on entering the Cabinet in July, when

"alarm bells" should have rung

He said: "The price I have paid is a high price, but it has been a necessary one to restore people's confidence in government and politics as a whole

and also my own integrity. "Through my own misjudgement I have allowed the impression to be created of wrongdoing and I am not going to allow that charge to be laid against a government that I care about more than anything

else in the world." Mr Mandelson said people would have "different views" about his arrangement with Mr Robinson. Some would say he was entitled to take a loan from a friend, while others would think "this is a whopping great loan and he's living heyond his

Mr Rohinson said he had been subjected to "a persistent and unfair" set of allegations about his husiness affairs, which "had come to a point which was not acceptable any more". However, Downing Street suggested Mr Rohinson, like Mr Mandelson, should have informed his civil servants about the loan.

Downing Street said there would be no inquiry into the leaking of the Robinson loan to Mr Mandelson, despite speculation that it was linked to the feud between him and Mr Brown. "I do not believe in the conspiracy theory," said Mr Blair's official spokesman. Peter Lilley, the deputy Tory

leader, called for an independent investigation to reassure the public that no other ministers had undisclosed links with Mr Robinson. "Public confidence in the Government's integrity has been sorely undermined. If they dither now, and more comes out, they will

never be believed again." Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, said Mr Mandelson made an honourable decision. His exit is a setback to Mr Ashdown, as Mr Mandelson was one of the strongest supporters of closer Labour-Liberal Democrat links.



At 16, Mary ran away from a life of abuse. Today she is homeless. Could you sleep easy on Christmas Eve knowing she was shivering in a bus shelter?

You can help keep Mary, and thousands of vulnerable people like her, safe and warm over Christmas. With £25 from you, Crisis can provide a warm bed, hot meals, clean clothes and someone to talk to at one of our shelters.

As the days count down to Christmas, nearly 10,000 homeless people are counting on Crisis. We're counting on you. Our service depends on public donations. So please send your £25 today - in time to help us huy the bedding, food and clothes we need to bring Mary in from the cold.

Yes, I'll keep homeless people warm:

I enclose a cheque made payable to Crisis. OR debit my:

Last three digits of Switch card no. 1 / Switch issue no. 1

Gifts of (250 or more are worth almost a third extra to us under Gift Aid

☐ £15 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐ £250* other £_

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Name (caps) Mr/Mrs/Ms _

OR please call our

again in the service of the party. Having ruefully told the edwould take many of his conon Europe, and do some travsheer presence made the He felt in his bones on Tuesstituents a lifetime to earn. elling, "exporting Blairism" as itor of the Hartlepool Mail yesidea that the Lahour left DONALD he puts it. He has always had a terday that he will have more would reassert itself sn preand then to keep it secret, was Countdown to Christmas

day night that the show was over and he told the Prime Minister so. After a night's sleep, he had not changed his mind and he didn't hang about. You could tell when Terry

Lewis, the unreconstructed Old Labour MP for Broms-



grove, congratulated him warmly for his honourable decisiveness and wished him without irony - a happy Christ-

mas, that the party has never liked him quite as much as yesterday. This matters because on it may rest his chances of eventually making a comehack. His decision to borrow from

Geoffrey Rohinson a sum that a colossal misjudgement, and he was right in the interests of himself and the Government to go. Not only that; but had he stay away from politics for long. tried to stay, it would have been much more difficult for Mr now. He is entitled to enjoy him-

Blair to part with Mr Rohinson. as Mr Mandelson and Mr Blair undoubtedly recognised. . What happens to him now?

He will rediscover the life on the back benches that he led from 1992-94. He will speak and write yen to run a large organisation, perhaps in the private sector. But he has never managed to and he is not that likely to leave

self. But if he is sensible he will resist the temptation to fly so close to the sun with his rich and powerful friends that he loses his appetite for the hard and unglamorous graft of backbench

time to spend in his constituency, he would be well advised to do just that. Mr Blair will regard his departure as a grave loss - for his advice, for his friendship in the notori-

side the party-not because he was loved, but because his posterous. For all these reasons, Mr Blair will want him back perhaps running the next election campaign, and perhaps in the Cabinet after that. Now it's up to him.

ously friendless world of high

politics, and for what

he symbolised. He was an

oddly reassuring figure to the

middle ground of politics out-

The Independent wishes its readers a happy and peace ful Christmas. In common with ptirer national newspapers, we shall not he publishing on Christmas Day, but we shall be back on Boxing Day with a three-section paper, includ-

He felt in his bones the show was over

Virginia Ironside

I can't stand my family at Christmas. What should I do?" Features P5 Jumbo crossword Win a prize in our Christmas compelition

CD Choice Our critics choose the year's best rock albums Arts P8

Anthony Quinn Review of Enemy of the State, plus the Top Ten Films of the Year



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*THE INDEPENDENT INSIDE THE REVIEW INSIDE THIS SECTION

Interest rate cut

The Monetary Policy

Committee bas voted

unanimously for rate cut

Likud defection Former minister is to Woman who lost parents challenge Netanyahu in in IRA blast has chained herself to Maze gate Foreign P8 Home P6

Released rapist is bound hy court curfew Home P7

Israel's elections Willy Claes guilty Suspended sentence for former Nato chief

Foreign P9

Business P11 Who, what, when? Test your skills on our sporting quiz of the year

Sport P18

ing the Magazine and the quiz of the year.

Features P5 Film P9

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HOME 2-7, FOREIGN 8-9, BUSINESS 10-13, SPORY 14-20, CRYPTIC CROSSWORD 2D, WEATHER

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**THE INDEPENDENT ON BOXING DAY

No regrets. Robbie Williams and the faces of 1998. Plus the quiz of the year

IN THE SATURDAY MAGAZINE

EPLUS A COMIC **EPIC BY MARTIN** NEWELL & ANNA PAVORD'S 1999 GARDEN ALMANAC

ST WRITING, WEEK IN, WEEK OUT: DEBORAH ROSS, HOWARD JACOBSON, HAMISH MCRAE, ROBERT FISK, TERENCE BLACKER, JOHN WALSH RICHARD WILLIAMS, DAVID AARONOVITCH, ANNE MCEIVOY, THOMAS SUTCLIFFE, MILES KINGTON, SUE ARNOLD, ANDREAS WHITTAM SMITH

Shocked MPs applaud swift decision to go

WESTMINSTER REACTION

THE RESIGNATIONS of Peter BY PAUL WAUGH Mandelson and Geoffrey Robinson were greeted with scarcely concealed delight by the Tories and a mixture of relief and genuine sadness among stunned Labour MPs.

manner of the two departure. has received any kinds of fione after 12 months and the nancial support from him or other within 48 hours of allegations first surfacing, struck support he has given them." politicians from all parties.

Mr Mandelson's resignation came as a shock to MPs who bereasonably efficient damagelimitation exercise in a series of media interviews on Tuesday.

Even left-wingers, many of whom had rubbed their hands with giee at the former secretary of state's discomfort, were impressed by his swift decision. But the delays over Mr Robinson's and correct" decision to reremoval won him few friends.

The deputy Tory leader, Peter Lilley, called for a full and independent inquiry into the events and claimed that it was "extraordinary" that the Prime Minister had not concluded in both cases that rules had been resigning," he said.

The Liberal Democrat MP

broken "The whole affair has shown that ministers have gone out of their way to hide their links with Geoffrey Robinson. We now need clear assur-The stark contrast in the ances that no other minister owe him any obligations for any

Other members of the Shadow Cabinet were less statesmanlike in private. "We can lieved he had carried out a hardly believe our luck," said one. "Christmas has come early," said another.

The Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, who saw Mr Mandelson as a key ally in his grand project to realign the left of British politics, said he had made an "honourable sign. "All of us who value prohity and the conduct of public duty would like to think that we would have done the same thing. We have almost forgotten what it is like to see ministers

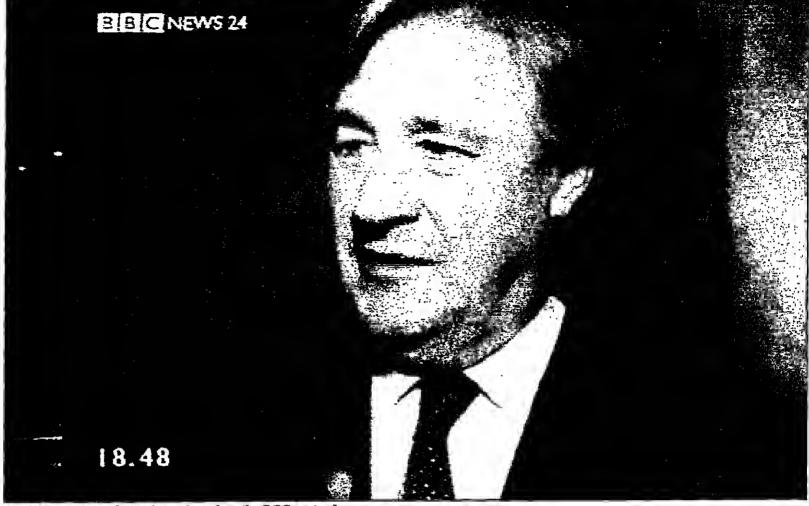
Charles Kennedy, a member of the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee that reprimanded Mr Robinson over as pects of his business affairs said the minister's 55-second apology to the House proved he

had to go.

That apology was made quate and subsequently he and Peter Mandelson became like two rock climbers tied together against the face of overwhelming odds. When one fell, it came as no surprise that both would be dragged down."

Paul Flynn, Labour MP for Newport West, said the resignations had finally succeeded in clearing out the "mess" that had dogged the Government. "It's right they should go. After the Bernie Ecclestone affair and Derek Draper, we are losing that reputation as a sleazefree party," he said.

There's a feeling that we are too fond of huxury lifestyles and we are too close to big business and lobbyists. We should put some clear pink water between ourselves and them."



Geoffrey Robinson being interviewed on the BBC yesterday

Parliamentary Labour Party, said many MPs would regret Mr Mandelson's resignation but saw Mr Robinson's departure as inevitable. The party will be sad about losing Peter's talents, but there is an element of reassurance around that we are serious about living up to the high standards we set ourselves."

Rhodri Morgan, MP for

tender for First Secretary of the Welsh Assembly, said Tony Blair's decision to accept Mr Mandelson's resignation must have been his most difficult to date. "We are all going to sleep easier because if it had carried on festering horrendously over

Christmas the Government would have suffered," he said.

an anti-sleaze ticket, said of Mr Mandelson: "Common sense tells you that when you get a loan of this size, you declare it exactly hudding with talent. - that's the lesson to all MPs. if in doubt, declare it."

The author and journalist, Robert Harris, one of Mr Mandelson's closest friends, said that he was sure the former Martin Bell, the Indepen- secretary of state would one day

such a political animal and After a suitable penance, be can

However, the enmities stirred up by Mr Mandelson's abrasive political style, together with continuing inquiries into the loan deal, make a

One union official, who re fused to be named, reflected the anger felt by some in the labour movement over plans to water down the Government's plans

for union recognition. "Mandelson has done us no favours over the last few months and I am sure a lot of ordinary trade unionists will

Most spectacular in long line of political downfalls*

THE RESIGNATIONS of Peter By Paul Waugh Mandelson and Geoffrey Robinson represent one of the most spectacular in a long line of Par-liamentary downfalls.

They may lack the spice of the Profumo, Parkinson and Mellor affairs but, in terms of sheer political impact, yesterday's events will rank prominently in the history of ministerial departures.

One of the most notorious

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AND LINUS GREGORIADIS

government resignations was that of Sir Charles "three-in-abed" Dilke, a minister in the Gladstone administration of 1882. Dilke was forced to quit his post as local government minister in 1886 when he was cited in a divorce case by his 22year-old sister-in-law, Virginia Crawford. Mrs Crawford accused him of seducing her and teaching her "every French vice in the book".

Sex reared its head again in 1963, when John Profumo, the Secretary of State for War, carried out what is possibly the most famous resignation this century. Profumo left the Conservative government after lying to the House of Commons about having sexual relations with Christine Keeler, a

HISTORY OF SCANDALS

affair with a Soviet naval attaché in London.

Labour scandals tended to centre on more lofty affairs. such as the 1967 departure of James Callaghan, the Chancellor, after Prime Minister Harold Wilson devalued the pound. In 1983, Cecil Parkinson, the

call-girl, who was also having an Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, was forced to resign after the disclosure of his affair with Sara Keays, his former secretary. The furore surrounding his resignation, which was reluctantly accepted by Margaret Thatcher, ruined Conservative celebrations after a landslide

LIGHTING UP

HIGH TIDES

general election victory.

Mrs Thatcher's own downfall in 1990 was hastened by the departure of both Nigel Lawson. Chancellor of the Exchequer. and Sir Geoffrey Howe, Foreign Secretary, after two momentous resignation speeches in the

Sex scandal soon reappeared in 1992, when David Mellor, Heritage Secretary, resigned after disclosures about an affair with Antonia de San-

YESTERDAY

EXTREMES

cha, an actress, and his failure to declare a paid holiday from Mona Bauwens, daughter of a high-ranking Palestine Liberation Organisation official.

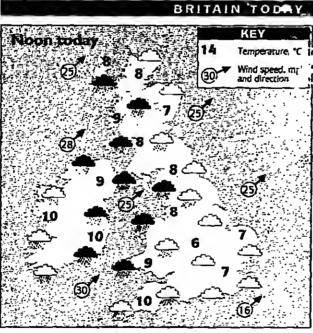
The key charge of sleaze against John Major's government took off two years later when Neil Hamilton, Corporate Affairs minister, was exposed for accepting cash for asking questions in the House

In 1995, Jonathan Aitken resigned as Chief Secretary to the Treasury to concentrate on his legal battles with the media over allegations concerning his business activities.

Tony Blair's only cabinet res-Ignation until yesterday had been that of Ron Davies, Sequatary of State for Wales, who in October over a "serious lapse of judgement" on Clapharn Common, south London.



Sunday 27th December at 3.35pm



FORECAST

SE & NE Scottand, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, N Isles: Inland areas will have frost at first. This will clear but it will become rather wet and windy this afternoon, A strong south-westerly wind. Max temp 7-8C (45-46F).

Informas Day will be mild but rather wet in the south. Elsewhere will have show rs, but any snow is likely to be confined to the mountain peaks of Scotland. On leading Day wet and possibly very windy weather will spread north-eastwards.

London: A41 Finchley Rd. From Swiss Cottage to Fortune Green. Major works at Finchley Rd Gyratory. Until 31st December. Combridgeshire A1 between Alconbury

Somph speed limit either side of Charmock Richard Services, Until 15th February 1999. West Yorkshires, M1 Between 342 Lottouse Internhange (M62) and 3-3 Stouton. Richarder and a 50mph speed (mit, 1943 21st Pand a 50mph speed (mit, 1943 21st Pand a 50mph speed (mit, Unit 31st December 1999.
Cumbrie: his J37 Kendal. Roadworks. car-hegeway reduced to 2 lanes both ways with a 50mph special brill. I mile south of the junc-tion. Unit 18th January 1999. oon. Una 18th January 1999.
AA Bendmatch: Call 0336 401777 for the Usest local and nadonal balfic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per man (enc VAT).



Coldest (day): Glen Ogle, DC (32F) Notest: Newquay, Cornwall 0,59 Ins 41 48 43 48 37 0.1B 0.01 0.06 43137686880083558879633443 37 37 37 34 43 46 45 52 2.3 0.06 6.4 0.06 0.2 0.07

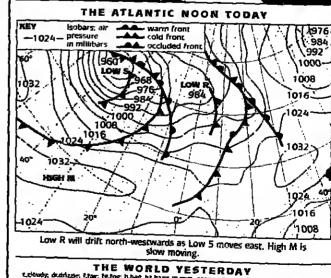
RAIN OR

SHINE...

A BOOK about the weather has become this year's essential Christmas stocking filler in Canada. The Ice Storm, which has sold almost 100,000 copies since it was published last month, charts the worst storm in Canada's history.

The storm, which hit last January, toppled more than 1,000 electricity pylons and affected three million people including 700,000 left without power for more than a month.







The move upmarket that led to a cabinet minister's fall from grace

Political Editor

PETER HAS got new friends be has joined the salon tendency," one of his close allies complained sbortly after last year's general election. "For some reason, he is impressed with the Saatchis and the Charles and Carla Powell set, He should remember his roots."

An integral part of Mr Mandelson's new life was his new £475,000 house in Notting Hill. one of the smartest neighbourhoods in west London. His move puzzled the many friends who had lived near him in Islington; they wondered why the New Labour stronghold in N1 was no longer good enough.

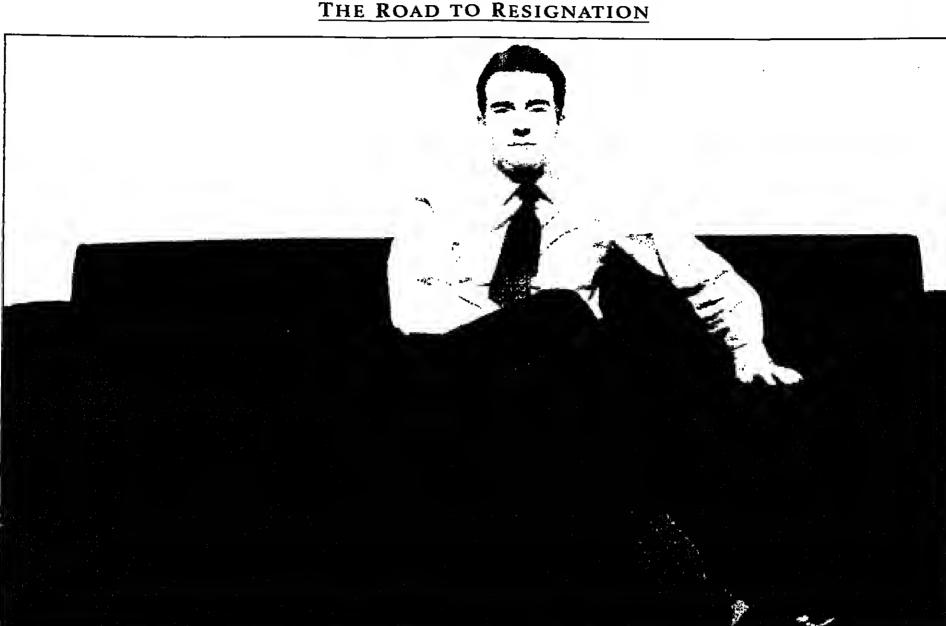
But few of them would have guessed that his move upmarket would sow the seeds of his rapid and astonishing fall from grace yesterday, only five months after entering the Cabinet as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Friends did wonder where the money for the new house had come from. They had no idea that he had turned to Geoffrey Robinson, a millionaire Labour MP languishing on the back benches in 1996 when the fateful £373,000 loan was sealed, who later became Paymaster-General. At the time, details of Mr Rohinson's offshore trusts and husiness links with the media tycoon Robert Maxwell had not emerged. To Mr Mandelson, he seemed safe.

The two men agreed to keep their astonishing arrangement a secret. At the time, it suited them both. With hindsight, Mr Mandelson admits he should have told Tony Blair - and, crucially, his top civil servant at the Department of Trade and Industry (DTD) when be won promotion to the Cabinet in July.

The dark secret returned to haunt Mr Mandelson this month as be heard rumours about the contents of a hostile hiography of him by Paul Routledge, the Mirror columnist, to be published in the new year. The word was that the book's unique selling point" was the

Rohinson loan. Mandelson that Charlie Whelan his sworn enemy, press secretary to the Chancellor, Gordon both Mr Routledge and Mr drinks with journalists that he ludicrous for words". had "got the story out". Mr



Theories abound about who told the press of Peter Mandelson's loan from Geoffrey Robinson, and why

Mr Routledge about the loan. In the event, the story sur-

Guardian on Tuesday, Mr Whelan strongly denies that he was ter's two most influential allies. the source, and the Brown camp suspects that Mr Mandelson's allies may have launched a preemptive strike against the Routledge biography aimed at "getting the story out of the way" during Parliament's Christmas Brown, and a close friend of recess. The Mandelson camp dismisses the idea that it leaked Rohinson - had boasted over the damaging revelation as "too

On Wednesday last week,

that Mr Whelan had tipped off story was about to break. On Thursday, his office at the DTI tipped off Alastair Campbell, the faced before the book in both Mr Downing Street press secretary Routledge's newspaper and The and a friend of Mr Mandelson's as they are the Prime Minis-

> Mr Campbell told Mr Blair, who responded by looking anxiously at his watch: he was about on the previous night's bombing of Iraq. None the less, he ordered that Sir Richard Wilson, the Cabinet Secretary, should investigate whether Mr Mandelson had breached the code of

> > The Ra Libes Pener Management NOP Security of State for Toron and Date

conduct for ministers. Sir Richard concluded that

ed" bimself against any conflict of interest hy standing down from handling the DTI inquiry into Mr Robinson's business activities in September.

Mr Blair hoped that would be the end of the matter and, in any case, had his hands full with Iraq. But Mr Mandelson spent an anxious weekend, at first in his Hartlepool constituency and then at his Notting Hill home. He feared that the only reason his ticking timebomb had not gone off was the air strikes on Iraq.

Discussing his fighthack keep his job. "I was reeling," he strategy with close friends, in- told one friend. To another ally,

Mandelson assumed this meant Mr Mandelson got wind that the Mr Mandelson had "insulat- he would be able to survive the conceded: "This was a very hig storm about to break around operation against me." him. "It was perfectly legitimate As Mr Mandelson continfor Geoffrey to belp me. He is ued his frantic round of media

> At 5pm on Monday, he knew delson. Another Downing the story would hreak the fol- Street official told them: "You lowing morning, and prepared won't be getting any red meat." interviews, starting on BBC hausted Mr Mandelson be-TV's Newsnight programme on lieved he was fighting a losing Monday As details from the battle. He feared that vesterday first editions emerged, he knew

> > as usual, were right.

interviews on Tuesday morning, Mr Campbell told Westminster journalists that Mr Blair was standing by Mr Man-

morning's newspapers would he had a fight on his hands to be bad, and his media instincts,

cluding Mr Campbell, he hoped the doyen of political strategists Chequers at 10pm on Tuesday, to resign after prolonging the Minister did not stand in his way.

Polly Borland/Katz

confessing to a "misjudgement" in not telling his civil servants about the Robinson loan when he moved to the DTL He said the affair was damaging the reputation of the Government and the Labour Party and, because of their close relationship, feared it would also damage Mr Blair.

promises to "clean up" politics er the years of Mr Mandelson told him: "We can't be like the last lot."

He was also mindful of the way that Tory ministers facing allegations of personal or financial sleaze tried desper-He telephoned Mr Blair at ately to hang on to office, only



be resigned quickly, he might be able to safeguard his integrity:

Mr Mandelson feared that at the DTI he was in the wrong department to do an effective joh after the disclosures. He knew the media were bound to judge his performance against the background of the Robinson affair - and to seek more damaging revelations.

He prohably calculated that, as a hackbencher, it would be easier to withstand the barrage of allegations about his private life, which he expects in the Routledge hiography.

Mr Blair, who hy now had time to digest a full report by Downing Street officials on the affair, was pessimistic about his friend's prospects but reluctant to abandon him. He told Mr Mandelson to "sleep on it" and not make a final decision until the morning. But hoth men knew be would have to resign. "We knew the game was up," one close ally admitted.

Rumours that Mr Mandelson might resign began to circulate at Westminster after Jack Cunningham, the Cahinet's enforcer, appeared to distance the Government from him in a BBC Radio 4 interview yesterday morning, admitting that mistakes had been made.

Press speculation that Mr Mandelson may bave misled the Britannia Building Society hy not revealing the Rohinson loan when he obtained a mortgage showed that the storm was far from dying down. How-Mindful of Mr Blair's ever this was not mentioned when Mr Mandelson rang Mr Blair at Itlam vester told him: "In the cold light of day, it is clear I have to resign.

"Peter's mind was made up. He was very upset, but he felt it was the right thing to do." Mr Blair's spokesman said. This time, a sad and subdued Prime

*Dear Tony, I can't believe I am writing this letter'

by Peter Mandelson to the Prime Minister yesterday.

"Dear Tony, I can scarcely believe I am writing this letter to you. As well as being one of my closest friends you are a close colleague whose leadership and political qualities I value beyond all others.

"As you have, I have reflected overnight on the situution concerning the loan I took from Geoffrey Robinson and I have decided to resign from the Government.

"As I said publicly yesterday, I do not believe that I have done anything wrong or improper. But I should not, with all candour, have entered into the arrangement. I should, having done so, told you and other colleagues whose advice I value. And I should have told my permanent secretary on learning of the inquiry into Geoffrey Robinson, although I had entirely stood aside from this.

"I am sorry about this situation. But we came to power promising to uphold the highest possible standards in public life. We have not just to do

"Therefore with huge regret I wish to resign. I am very you placed in me both at the "In just 18 months you have

gramme of modernisation. Labour man and I am not prepared to see the party and the Peter Mandelson's letter of resignation ...

"You can be assured, of course, of my continuing friendship and total loyalty. Yours ever, Peter."

delson's letter of resignation: "Dear Peter, you will know better than anyone the feelings

This is the text of the letter sent so, but we must be seen to do

proud of the role I played in helping you and previous leaders of the Labour Party to make our party electable and to win our historic victory last May. I am proud of the trust Cabinet office and at the DTL

helped to transform this country and the Government has made huge progress delivering on our manifesto and its pro-"I will always be a loval

Government suffer the kind of attack this issue has provoked.

This is the text of the Prime Minister's reply to Mr Man-

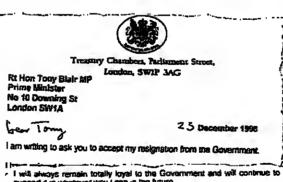
with which I write to you. You

and I have been personal friends and the closest of political colleagues. "It is no exaggeration to say

that without your support and advice we would never have built New Labour. "It was typical of you, when we spoke last night, that your

lieved that since there had been a misjudgement on your part, then, as you said to me 'we can't be like the last lot' and that what we are trying to achieve for the country is more important than any individ-

"But I also want you to thought was for the reputation know that you have my proof the Labour Party and the found thanks for all you have Government and that you bedone and my belief that, in the the last 18 months and have



... Followed by Geoffrey Robinson's words of regret

future, you will achieve much, much more with us. Yours ever Tony.

GEOFFREY ROBINSON

just a generous soul. He gave

me a loan I will repay in due

course, with interest," Mr Man-

delson said.

This is the text of Geoffrey Robinson's resignation letter to the Prime Minister:

Dear Tony, I am writing to ask you to accept my resignation from the Government. "I have enjoyed the work of

welcomed in particular the opportunity to work on the economic strategy that is designed to secure the renewal of our country. But, as you know. I have heen subjected to a persistent - and I believe unfair – set of allega-

tions about my business affairs. "I have already accepted responsibility and have apologised to the House of the past concerning registration of interests.

"But although my affairs have been under full political and media scrutiny for more than a year, it is clear that I have not misused my position months hounded by the cameither as an MP or minister.

"I have done nothing wrong in any of these areas and I will vigorously defend myself against any allegations.

In the case of the loan to Peter Mandelson, I merely considered myself in 1996 as someone in a position to help a long standing friend, with no

request for anything in return. There comes a time when, after more than 12 months of a highly charged political campaign, the point has heeo reached when I feel that it is no longer right that you or your Government should be affected by or have to contend with these attacks.

"I will always remain totally loyal to the Government and will continue to support it in whatever way I can in the fu-

Yours, Geoffrey

Commons for oversights in This is the text of the letter from the Prime Minister to Geoffrey Robinson:

"Dear Geoffrey, thank you for your letter. I accept your decision with regret. I know that you have felt these past paign against vou.

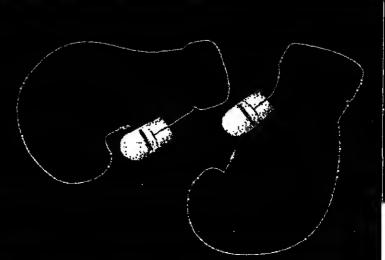
"I want you to know, however, that what I remember and thank you for, is your immense contribution to the Government.

The windfall tax which helped fund the New Deal for the unemployed: the reform of the corporate tax system: the saving of the coal industry, the agreement with the private sector to give the higgest boost to science we have ever given to Britain, the reinvigoration of the Private Finance Initiative: for all your business sense and helpful advice, we thank

'You have performed the task of public servant with great dedication in circumstances of extraordinary difficulty. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Yours ever. Tony.

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A political triangle that fell apart

moved from asset to liability in the last few days. But several of those close to Tony Blair were last night making little effort to pretend that his departure was other than a serious blow to the Prime Minister.

Full of internal tensions it fraction of the Cabinet is not so large that it can lose one of its three founder members, however controversial.

Mr Mandelson is a figure who generates so many myths that it is hard to separate the legend from reality. He was by no means the only architect of the Labour Party's modernisation. But he has, like Mao's comrades in 1948, a pretty special place in the history of the

ty begun by Neil Kinnock when he became Labour leader in

Indeed if anyone should take the blame, or credit, for the rise of Peter Mandelson it is Neil Kinnock, who backed his apmay be but the modernising pointment by the National Executive Committee as director of communications in 1985.

Mr Mandelson proved an invaluable ally to Mr Kinnock and others in the then Labour leader's heroic struggle to reverse the huge set-backs to the party's popularity inflicted by the surge of Bennism five

Strange as it seems now. Tony Blair and to a lesser extent Gordon Brown, were once,

Mandelson's proteges. Mr blair, especially, was "trained up" by Mr Mandelson in the art of handling the media - a highly important skill for a man who would become the most media

Each of them, as Mr Mandelson started to see as early as the 1987 election, were not only the most talented politicians of their generation but were also developing a farreaching vision for how Labour could once again become the

natural party of government.

In policy terms, Mr Mandelson was nowhere near as inventive as either Mr Brown and Mr Blair. But his consistency as a Labour Party revisionist and his signal expertise in devising

THE RISE TO INFLUENCE

particular issue, his ability to his two moderniser friends it compress it into a soundbite which would lodge in the pubhe mind, and his knowledge of conscious of post-war Prime which fournalists would be most receptive to which message, were all invaluable assets

to his more senior colleagues. From 1988 to 1990 and again from 1992 to 94 the men increasingly worked together until they were acting as an almost inseparable trio.

The traumatic period of uncertainty over whether Mr Brown or Mr Blair would run as leader in the wake of John Smith's death famously sowed the seeds of the enmity between Mr Brown and Mr Mandelson, who became convinced that of

was Mr Blair who looked the

But while one side of one of the most remarkable triangles in British politics was fractured, the other two sides - between Mr Brown and Mr Blair and between Mr Mandelson and Mr Blair - remained intact. Mr Blair regarded Mr Man-

deison as too controversial a figure within the Labour Party to make him an open member of his leadership campaign team. But as "Bobby" he performed a clandestine and central role in the campaign, giving his usual mixture of media, tactical and strategic advice. And he

Gordon Brown, up to end in-cluding the general election. While Mr Brown was in over-

all charge of the campaign and its strategy, Mr Mandelson had spent the best part of two years planning its mechanics while continuing, along with the then Shadow Chancellor, to give a stream of political advice. And with the help of Philip Gould, the man he brought in to provide research, after he was appointed director of communications in 1985, Mr Mandelson also gave

polling advice. It seemed baffling to many in a party which took the best part of a decade to shake off its deep susplcion of, and hostility towards, the press that someone whose initial skills and expericontinued to do so, along with should come to assume such tance of his old friend Alastair But not in Ten Downing Street.

nature of oppositions, for whom the media is virtually the only weapon, apart from parliament, at their disposal. And the second is, as Mr Mandelson had been one of the first prominent Labour figures to realise, the Marshall McLuhan-esque truth that in modern politics it is impossible to separate the medium from the message. Just as the good salesman whose product is thought to be unsafe, or useless, goes back to his bosses and tells them to change the product, so the political media man begins to exercise and in-

fluence in policy. This helps to explain not only Mr Mandelson's role, but ence were in media relations . the steadily increasing impor-

importance but that overholds two important points. One is the delson provided not only advice, but in the notoriously friendless world of high politics, friendship. Last but not least, he was a lightning conductor. As the leadership's most unpopular figure he was able to do down its enemies and take the heat by being its public defender when it got into trouble. And in all this Mr Mandelson had a revisionist clarity which dated at least from his time as a Lambeth councillor in the early

> Mr Mandelson has never been short of faults but inconsistency hasn't been one of them. There will no doubt be jubilation in many quarters of the Labour Party this Christmas.

The millionaire businessman who wanted to help

ROBINSON'S DEFENCE

GEOFFREY ROBINSON gave up his hold on Treasury office after surviving months of speculation and controversy about his husiness background.

It was finally an act of generosity that brought him down, and Downing Street was quick to absolve the millionaire businessman from blame. "Geoffrey ls not a leper," the Prime Minister's official spokesman said. "He has been a Labour member of Parliament for a very long time and he is somebody who is very generous."

However, it was the continuing questioning of Mr Robinson's husiness links and his secret funding of Gordon Brown's private office in opposition that made his resignation inevitable.

Disclosures are still emerging of the undisclosed sums he gave to the Smith Political

BY COLIN BROWN Chief Political Correspondent

death of the party leader John Smith, to give support to Mr Brown as Shadow Chancellor before the 1997 general election. Mr Robinson's penthouse in

Park Lane, central London, has regularly been used by the Chancellor and his advisers, Ed Balls and Charlie Whelan, for planning meetings and watching football on television, with the support of room service from the Grosvenor Park hotel.

The "charges" against Mr Robinson include:

■ The Department of Trade and Industry inquiry into allegations of possible accounting offences by Hollis Industries plc, a Maxwell company of which Mr Robinson was chairman. The accounts showed the chairman receiving £200,000 in re-

muneration which he denied ever receiving;

■ The Committee on Standards and Privileges which said, in a report in January, that his interest in the Orion Trust would have been better registered" although he was cleared of breaching the rules of the

On18 November, the committee found he had broken the rules of the House by failing to register his share-holding in Stenbell Ltd, through which he paid staff salaries at the New Statesman. He was censured and forced to make a personal

apology in the Commons; And the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards has been asked to investigate his failure to register his business relationship with Robert Maxwell between 1987 and 1991. Born in Sheffield, the son of

a furniture manufacturer, Mr He made his millions from Robinson was managing di-

Mr Robinson and his wife, Marie-Elena

TransTec, a Midlands company rector of Jaguar Cars by the age he founded specialising in the of 33, before winning his seat for transfer of ideas from univer-Coventry North West in 1976. sity to the shopfioor.

During his time at Jaguar he met Joska Bourgeois, a Belgian millionairess who gave him the backing that enabled him to found TransTec. After her death tune, which he placed in an offshore trust.

His growing wealth made enemies in the Labour Party and he fought off a Bennite attempt to oust him from his seat. With the collapse of the left, the Blairites saw his value. He was appointed Paymaster-General in May, last year, to spearhead the drive to hring private finance into public schemes. He refused to draw his ministerial salary. "He was a bit naive, and like a fish out of water in politics," said a minister, "But he didn't draw a salary. He didn't need all this aggro. He just did it because he wanted to make contribution."

The Tories - stung by the "sleaze" allegations against them - scrutinised his business dealings and found a number of examples where he had failed aged 81, she left him another for- to make proper or full disclosures to the House. They found he had offshore holdings worth an estimated £30m.

The writing was on the wall for Mr Robinson when Mr Blair decided against using his sumptuous Tuscan villa last summer for his family holiday, having enjoyed its attractions the previous year. "It marked the card for Geoffrey," said a ministerial source. "He was very put out and puzzled but he recognised he was drawing too much flak and Blair was distancing himself."

The Prime Minister's instinct was to drop Mr Robinson from the Government in his July reshuffle and replace him with Geoff Hoon, the Lord

Chancellor's spokesman in the Commons, hut Mr Brown fought to keep Mr Robinson in his Treasury team.

The Chancellor and the multi-millionaire had become firm friends. He was appointed to the Treasury team to hring a husiness vitality to the Blair government.

Mr Robinson's husiness insight hrought him some surprising allies within the Cabinet. One of his strongest supporters was John Prescott, the deputy Prime Minister, who privately found his knowledge of business invaluable in dealing with the private sector to finance public transport schemes.

"He came up with new ideas and if John came up with ideas. he would not reject them. He would say, 'Let's talk about it', and find a way of making them work," said a Whitehall source.

The rise of Blairites with modern ideas

THE CABINET RESHUFFLE

TONY ELAIR reaffirmed his authority over his Cabinet yesterday with the promotion of the moderniser, Stephen Byers, to the post of Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

It was a clear signal that the Prime Minister wants Mr Byers to continue with the policy direction taken by Peter Mandelson over the semi-privatisation of the Post Office and trade union recognition.

Mr Mandelson angered Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, by refusing to fully privatise the Post Office, opting instead for greater commercial freedom within the public sector.

Geoffrey Robinson is expected to be replaced as Paymaster General by Geoff Hoon, Lord Irvine's ministerial spokesman in the House of Commons. The Lord Chancellor was said to be resisting the pressure to allow his junior minister to be moved by Mr Blair, but was expected

to be overruled Mr Hoon, a well-liked min-night in Whitehall that Mr Blair

BY COLIN BROWN AND PAUL WAUGH

ister and a lawyer, was pencilled in for the post last July, but was kept in his position as Commons spokesman for the Lord Chancellor's department after a successful rearguard action by Mr Brown to stop Mr Robinfew people who can get on with . Social Security Secretary. Lord Irvine like Geoff Hoon, and he doesn't want to lose him, but it looks like he will be over-

ruled," said a Whitehall source. State for Health, was promoter son, Joe, aged seven, with his ed into the Cabinet by Mr Blair to replace Mr Byers as Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

Mr Milburn, 40, is regarded as hard-headed and a Brown fice and at party conferences. supporter - which may have cost him the Cabinet promotion last July - but he regards himself as much a moderniser as Mr Byers, who is a close friend.

will replace Mr Milburn as health minister with John Denham, the minister of social security, a Blairite who did much of the spade work on the reform of pensions before Frank Field resigned last July from the task of "thinking the unthinkable". Since then, Mr Denham has won his spurs as the numson being sacked. "There are ber two to Alistair Darling, the

Mr Milburn will be able to mark a double celebration tomorrow. Christmas Day is also the second birthday of his sec-Alan Milburn, the Minister of ond son, Danny. He has anothpartner, Ruth Briel, Mr Milburn takes his parental responsibilities seriously. He has been seen pushing a pram to his of-

He stayed up all night writing the White Paper on health reforms to be introduced in April, and the only way he could stay awake was to play rap and There was speculation last soul music, loudly in his office, causing a few raised eyebrows.



Stephen Byers (left), the newSecretary of State for Trade and Industry and Alan Milburn, the new Chief Secretary to the Treasury

Mr Milburn is expected to give his successor a hard grilling over the finances at the Department of Health. "He thought he was over-generous towards the GPs," saida friend last night. Mr Milburn made his mark as shrewd questioner on the Public Accounts Committee after winning his Darlington seat in 1992 and his skills at probing public finances will be well used in the Treasury.

The promotion of Mr Byers cil, his grasp of policy, media in a political career that can justly be described as "meteoric", making him tipped as a future leadership candidate.

The MP for Typeside North reached the Cabinet this summer, just six years after entering Parliament, to become

Chief Secretary to the Treasury. A former law lecturer and leader of North Tyneside Coun- body to decide which employ-

to the DTI was the latest stage savvy and ability to rise effortlessly without making too many enemies has led some to compare him with Mr Blair.

He has inherited a controversial compromise over trade union recognition. Mr Mandelson upset the unions, who fear the forthcoming Fairness at Work legislation will give too much power to an arbitration

ers should concede trade union recognition. Mr Byers is likely to face a Commons rebellion by Labour MPs over the detail on the Bill. The TUC last night said it looked forward to working with Mr Byers. "Next year promises to be an historic year for trade unions with the Fairness at Work Bill due in January and with the new

nership," a statement said.

Despite his Blairite credentials, the 45-year-old MP can. and frequently does, claim that his background proves that he is not some Millbank clone obsessed with the metropolis. His first taste of politics came in the North East, where he was one of the "young bloods" who is lought off both right-wingers and militants to lead North Tyopportunities for social partneside council. "That put steel in my back-bone," he said later.

Crucial questions remain over loan

BY ANDREW VERITY

CRUCIAL QUESTIONS remain over whether Peter Mandelson Correctly declared the £373,000 loan from Geoffrey Robinson when he applied for a mortgage for his Notting Hill home.

Mortgage experts also suggested yesterday that a loan without regular interest had agreed with the former trade secretary, would normally be considered a "gift".

Under the normal procedures of the Britannia Building Society, which granted the of the Data Protection Act. mortgage, Mr Mandelson was required to sign a declaration insist on being told of any out-

stating he had not arranged any other loan, second mortgage or improvement grant in connection with the property in Northumberland Place.

He was also required to certify that all the details he had given on Britannia's mortgage applicatioo form were correct. Mr Mandelson has said he could not recall whether he repayments, as Mr Robinson declared the loan when he applied to borrow £150,000 in financial commitments. We late 1996. Britannia Building always oeed to establish Society said it was legally barred from answering questions on his application because

Mortgage lenders usually

MORTGAGE MYSTERY

standing loans held by a bor- the borrower is funding the cant will become unable to

keep up repayments. A spokesman for Britannia said: "Anyone who applies for a whether or not a customer is fully able to repay."

When a mortgage represeots only a small fraction of a property's value, lenders also expect to be informed of how

rower, to let them assess the rest of the purchase. While risk that the mortgage appli- gifts from relatives are accepted, commercial loans are frowned upon.

Building societies will occasionally waive some of their norloan with Britannia is required mal lending criteria to VIPs, to give us details of all their but will still carry out certain vital checks Failure to disclose a sub-

stantial second loan, secured against the same property, would trigger immediate concern, because it would prevent the lender forcing a sale should

In his letter to Elizabeth Filkin, the new parliamentary commissioner for standards, Mr Mandelson claimed his loan from Mr Robinson was not a gift, in spite of Mr Robinson's agreement not to demand regular interest payments.

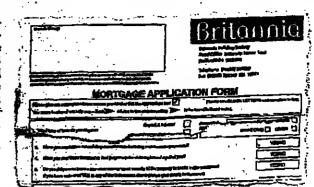
Mr Mandelson said the agreement was that part of the loan would be repaid by the sale of his former property. The remainder was to be repaid upon the sale of the house in Northumberland Place.

According to mortgage mer minister defaulted. experts, loans would normally be considered a "gift" if the lender had waived the right to regular repayments, as Mr

delson's arrangement, interest owed to Mr Robinson, at the Midland Bank base rate of 6.25 per cent, would not be repaid but added to the value of the loan. By now, the loan amount has risen to more than £420,000. By 2006 Mr Mandelson would

owe Mr Robinson £683.908. Mr Mandelson said Mr Robinson would also be at liberty to register a charge over the property, giving him the right to force a sale if the for-

A search of the Land Registry for the property in Northumberland Place confirms Mr Robinson has oot



Did Peter Mandelson abide by Britannia's rules?

a charge on the property.

The only charge is for the property in November 1996.

exercised his right to register mortgage from the Britannia Building Society, placed on the



Dream of following grandfather ends

MILLENNIUM DOME

UNTIL YESTERDAY when peo- By KATE WATSON-SMYTH ple talked of Mandelson's folly they were referring to the Mil-

lennium Dome. Now that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has resigned, the "tacky theme park" and "white elephant" has lost its most passionate

Peter Mandelson cast himself as the saviour of the Dome. Like his grandfather Herbert Morrison, who master-minded the 1951 Festival of Britain while carrying out his duties as Clement Attlee's Foreign Secretary, Mr Mandelson wanted to prove that he too could organise a national extravaganza.

His political opponents felt his position conflicted with his duties as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

The Dome will now be overseen by Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, until a replacement can be found. Stephen Bayley, the former Amarican Airlines. creative director of the Dome. The Whise, he who resigned this year over poject and a fall-out with Mr Mandelson, said: "It does amuse me hugely that the year began with my resignation and ends with his I don't want to ap...team," the company said last pear to be gloating but..." night.

Mr Mandelson's role in the Dome was as the holder of the Government's single share in the New Millennium Experi-ence Company, (NMEC) which organises the project in Greenwich, south London. But his departure raises serious questions over the ability of the private business needed to mille the project work. It is also more questionable that the Dome will be ready on time.

Mr Mandelson always maintained he saw no conflict between his political and his Dome roles. The assurance came because he was aware British Airways was one of the sponsors of the Dome and that the Department of Trade and Industry was one of the bodies due to rule on the possible threat to competitiveness of BA's proposed link-up with

procuring sponsorship con-tracts for the Dome. "All contracts were handled by the NMEC in-house sponsorship

But Peter Ainsworth, the Conservative spokesman on culture said: "The news that Peter Mandelsoo has relinquished his responsibility for the Millennium Dome is the best Christmas present the New Millennium Experience

Company could have had Ever since Mr Mandelson took control, the project has suffered from allegations of conflicting interest, made worse by his appointment as Trade and Industry Secretary earlier this

Jennie Page, the chief executive of the NMEC, said that despite Mr Mandelson's departure it was business as usual. "He has devoted a great deal of time and effort to the Dome, for which everyooe here is extremely grateful," she said, The NMEC says it is close to gathering all the £150m sponsorship it needs for the Dome, due to

opeo on 31 December 1999. Whether Mr Mandelson at-The NMEC, however, intends the celebrations remains sister for Mandelson was not to be seen. He has said the litical interference in the pro- involved in negotiating or Dome will be a chance to "reflect oo the pride we have in our past and the confidence we have in our future". Unfortunately for him, it may simply provide a chance to reflect on his downfail.

It's a loss for us, too, say the voters of Hartlepool

THE CONSTITUENCY

BY DARIUS SANAI

THERE HAS always been an irony in Peter Mandelson's choice of parliamentary seat. Since his election to Parliament in 1992. Labour's ultimate moderniser has represented a depressed north-eastern town whose image is the epitome of the traditional Labour Party. But while there is no greater

enmity than between two sides (in the same political party, there was no dancing on the streets of Hartlepool yesterday. The consensus was that

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while Mr Mandelson appeared to be the victim of arrogance. the resignation of the local MP from such a powerful position could only be a loss for the town. Philip Ash. 17, a bus driver. said: "It's a shame. He has done a good job for Hartlepool. I think

his resignation is just to please everyone else, there was a lot of pressure on him to quit and it will please the Opposition as he is the strength of the party."



new Labour should in theory be simmering in Hartlepool, hut many traditional supporters have been cooverted by Mr Mandelson's devotion to coostituency matters. "Despite being one of the busiest figures in government he doesn't neglect his constituents," said Peter Barron, editor of the Hortlepool Mail. "He has done

very visible in the town despite all his other commitments.

But Mr Barron felt Mr Mandelson was right to resign. "He was in a position where he had no choice. I just can't believe he could have been so naive. "There will be mixed feelings about the resignation, but this

is a traditional working class

northern town and the whole

that most will think (resignation] was the right thing to do."
The ambivalence in the reaction towards Mr Mandelson

that for a Labour MP will be so

alien to the people of Hartlepool

has deeper roots than Labour Party factionalism. Hartlepool, once a byword for post-industrial desolation, has undergone something of an economic re-covery of late. As Stephen Mc-Cormack, 28, a factory worker, said yesterday: "I thought he should have stuck it out. He has done a lot for Hartlepool."

However, the positive views are not unanimous. Melanie Sonnick, 22. a shop assistant in the town, said: "All he has done for Hartlepool is bring us bad publicity."

Though it will he little con solation to the fallen minister. whose preferred constituency encompasses the cappuccine coves of Notting Hill, it is the ultimate irony that his prompt resignation may actually boost his standing in a town where old

www...now_we_can_share those_dodgy_jokes.com



Headlines helped downfall

PRESS REACTION

A CAREER of manipulating the BY PAUL MCCANN media to his advantage came to naught yesterday as oewspapers united in their condemnation of Peter Mandelson.

Downing Street's decision to accept his resignation yesterday morning was influenced by the vitriol poured on the minister and the Government hy the morning's newspapers.

The Daily Mail led the attack, with a front page that screamed "Master of Deception". Its leader likened the minister to Icarus, a man brought down by his soaring de. It condemned governmeot "cronvism" and raised the spectre of Robert Maxwell and his links not just with

other Labour heavyweights. Even the Labour-support-

ing Mirror weighed in, de-scribing Mandelson's folie de grandeur. The Government underestimated how it would impact on the public," said editor Piers Morgan yesterday. "They were hoping because he did nothing illegal he would get away with it. The press realised how such a large sum would disgust the public." Under the headline "A crisis of arrogance and greed", The Mir-

ror also attacked cronyism.

The Express led with the

truth", and accused Mr Mandelson of offering only "token regrets". In The Times he was compared to Becky Sharp from the novel Vanity Fair. both have a "flaw" of wanting to "lead the high life on virtually

The Guardian stopped short of calling for Mr Mandelson's resignation, but lamented his poor judgement and reported on the private "glee" of many Labour MPs at his discomfort. Certain elements recurred in yesterday's coverage. Almost

rise from a humble cottage to

headline "How he hid the no one could resist was comparing his Notting Hill home with those of his constituents. The Mail claimed he could have bought nine bouses in Hartlepool with the borrowed money, The Mirror said it was 30, The Telegraph said it was 36 and The Sun said he could have bought a whole street.

The Sun's front page com-bined two quotes from Tony Blair speeches: "We are on the side of ordinary people against privilege. We must be purer than pure." If that was so asked The Sun,"how the hell all papers traced Mandelson's can Mandy stay?" It seems that after seeing yesterday's his recent status as king of front pages, Tony I Nineties cool. The other device the same question. front pages, Tony Blair asked

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Mickey eclipsed by Disney's own Pooh

"MERRY CHRISTMAS, Pooh!" By ANDREW GUMBEL said Christopher Robin. "You've been such a generous bear, such a kind bear, you deserve pots and pots of honey!"

"Oh, thank you!" exclaimed Pooh as he helped himself to a smackerel. "Mmm," he said, licking his lips. "What a very sweet Christmas this is!"

And so the world's favourite cuddly bear heralds the festive season, surrounded by all his friends from the Hundred Acre Wood. There is snow outside, and Puch is wearing a Sente hat and scarf. It doesn't sound much like A A Milne. But that's because it isn't A A Milne, except by the vaguest of associations. This is Disney Pooh, a revamped version of the original Bear of Very Little Brain as conceived for the multimedia age, and - to judge by his performance in shopping malls across the United States - a monstrously successful marketing exercise.

Ann Braybrook's seasonal "based on the Pooh stories by slew of spin-offs flying out of the shops and into toddlers' bedrooms this year. At every turn parents are confronted with Pooh books, Pooh videos. Pooh clothing. Pooh satchels and school bags. Pooh sheets. Pooh toothbrush holders and Pooh soap dispensers.

According to Disney, Pooh is higger than any of its spin-offs from A Bug's Life or Toy Story higger than Mickey Mouse. Winnie the Pooh is currently



line in America, with only Barbie pipping him to the post. "Pooh belongs to every-

body," says John Singh of Disney's consumer products division in an attempt to explain a phenomenon that has sky-rocketed in just two short years. Mostly his success book The Sweetest Christmas, is a reflection of Disney'a extraordinary marketing mus-A A Milne", is just one of a cleand an assiduous corporate courtship that stretches back more than half a century.

As early as the Forties, Walt Disney entered tortuous negotiations for the rights to the Pooh menagerie, dealing with hoth A A Milne's estate and Dutton Publishing, which issued the hooks in America.

When a deal was eventually struck in 1964, Disney trod carefully, giving up on the idea or The Lion King. He's even of a full-length feature and opting instead for a series of short films that adhered closely to the original stories.

From the outset, however, E H Shepard's illustrations were redrawn as Walt Disney decided, in quintessential Hollywood fashion, that Winnie the Pooh didn't look enough like Winnie the Pooh. No longer Christopher Robin's raggedy bed companion, Pooh became a smiling Californian sort of bear with fur as golden as the honey he so loved to eat.

In time, as Disney invented whole new plotlines to put Place on TV by divisioned at very West Coast psychobabble sensibility, which involved lots of hugging and affirmations of friendship. He also acquired a skimpy bright red T-shirt that on one less chubby than he might have been accused of looking downright sexy.

For 30 years, Disney subcontracted the merchandising of Pooh to Sears Roebuck but that all changed in 1996.

Disney had developed into a world-class entertainment conglomerate with access to television stations, shops and a string of toy-making contractors kept busy by its neverending series of hig screen hits. It took over the merchandising itself and the Pooh machine went into overdrive.

In deference to parents with memories of the original stories, Disney has put out a line of toys called Classic Pooh. which more closely resemble the E H Shepard originals, but to most American kids Winnie the Pooh is Disney Pooh and they wouldn't want him any



Pooh and friends in the Disney cartoons which portray Pooh as a golden, California-style bear, a far cry from E H Shepard's original drawings (top left)

Fury over parole for IRA prisoners

WOMAN whose parents were killed in a notorious IRA bombing chained herself to a gate at the Maze prison near Belfast yesterday in protest against the release of republican prisoners for Christmas.

Those who were given 10-day parole yesterday included Sean Kelly, the IRA prisoner whose homb killed both Michelle Williamson's parents. Kelly slipped away, avoiding Ms Williamson, who later said: Kelly is an even bigger murdering coward than I thought

The incident illustrated the sensitivity over prisoner re-leases, which form part of the Good Friday Agreement. More than 200 permanent releases have already taken place under the agreement.

Yesterday it was the usual Christmas paroles. Those released were associated with some of the most notorious incidents and darkest days of violence of the Troubles.

Sean Kelly, for example, was bimself almost killed in the Shankill Road fish shop attack in 1993, when an IRA bomb detonated prematurely, killing a colleague and nine Protestant civilians, Other IRA prisoners on parole include Patrick Magee - or the "Brighton bomber" - who was jailed for the 1984 bomb in the Grand Hotel which killed five people attending the Conservative Party's annual conference.

who will spending Christmas at home include Michael Stone, As part of the conditions for tion gunman who killed three funeral in Belfast in 1988, and Johnny "Mad Dog" Adair. head of the UDA's assassination

Ireland Correspondent

squads, was the IRA's target in the Shankill Road bombing. Under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, all prison-

ers affiliated to the major paramilitary groups can expect permanent release hy mid-2000. While technically they can be recalled to prison at any time, this is considered unlikely except if there is a return to wholesale violence or if they are seen to become involved again in terrorist activity.

Unionist critics of the agreement, together with the Conservative Party, have called for a halt to releases unless the IRA begins to decommission weapons. The Government's position, however, is that the releases were specified in the agreement and have since been endorsed in the referendum.

The Northern Ireland Secretary. Mo Mowlam, said yesterday: "It's not easy to go through the kind of changes that are taking place as a result of the agreement. The accelerated release of prisoners is tough, not just for those with families or friends who have been murdered, but I think it's bitter for everybody, a bitter pill to swallow."

Opposition to the releases has also come from police representatives on both sides of the border. In the republic, four men convicted of killing On the loyalist side, these members of the Gardai have

As part of the conditions for the Ulster Defence Associa- releases in the north, all prisoners must not make any pubpeople attending a republican lic comment, appear at any demonstration or involve themselves in any sort of behaviour Adair, who was regarded as the which could cause distress to victims or victims' relatives...

No charges for Bridgewater Four police

SEVEN POLICE officers who BY IAN BURRELL were alleged to have fabricated evidence that led to the false conviction of the Bridgewater Four are not to be charged by

the Crown Prosecution Service. Solicitors for the Four said yesterday's announcement by the CPS "beggared belief" and even David Calvert-Smith, the new Director of Public Prosecutions, said he appreciated the decision could be seen as "difficult to understand".

Ann Whelan, the mother of Michael Hickey, one of those wrongly convicted, said the CPS action was "horrendous, outrageous, and deplorable". She vowed to fight on.

Supporters of the wrongly convicted men had expected police officers to face charges after the Court of Appeal raised "grave concerns" last year over the police investigation. Michael Hickey, Vincent

Hickey and Jim Robinson were freed by the court after spending 17 years in prison. Pat Molloy, the fourth man convicted of murdering the newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater, died in prison

Eight detectives - one of

Home Affairs Correspondent

whom has since died - were implicated in the Court of Appeal ruling delivered in July last year over the way Staffordshire Police gathered evidence in the

But Mr Calvert-Smith said there was no realistic prospect of convicting the officers. He pointed out the Court of Appeal had access to material that would not be admissible in a

criminal trial. Allegations focused on claims that Pat Molloy confessed to being at the scene of the crime only after heing shown records of a forged interview with co-defendant Vincent Hickey

James Nichol, the solicitor representing all three freed men, said there was clear evidence against at least two of the officers who had signed statements denying a take interview report had been drawn up con-cerning Michael Hickey, a fact contradicted by scientific tests proving the existence of the report and which formed the plank of the appeal case.

IN BRIEF

Britons die in Bosnia air crash

TWO BRITISH servicemen were killed on Tuesday when their helicopter crashed in flames near their base in Bosnia, the Ministry of Defence said yesterday. A third crewman was seriously ill in hospital after the Lynx crashed at Gornji Vakuf, 40 miles west of Sarajevo.

Rushdie fiight ban lifted

BRITISH AIRWAYS has lifted its nine-year han on the author Salman Rushdie flying with the airline after receiving assurances from the Foreign Office. The ban was imposed on security grounds when Iran issued a death sentence in response to The Salanic Verses.

Branson balloon heads for Pacific

AFTER LEAVING Chinese airspace, Richard Branson's round-the-world balloon attempt was last night facing a

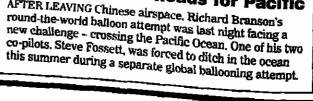


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DAY 30TH DEC

Suppliers Call for fluoride in water

water supplies moved closer yesterday, as the water industry called for a change in the law to hand over the decision to health authorities.

Water UK, which represents the country's water utility companies, delighted campaigners and medical bodies by suggesting the decision on whether to add fluoride should oo longer be made by the water firms and instead be taken oo medical, not commercial grounds, after public consultation

Such a move would almost certainly increase the number of people drinking fluoridated water, which has been shown to cut the incidence of tooth decay. About 10 per cent of the population, 5.5 million people, currently have fluoride added to their water, mainly in the West

Midlands and the North East. Fluoride occurs naturally in all water supplies and in some places, such as Hartiepool, the level is high enough to provide protection. In other areas, where the natural level has beeo topped up artificially, decay rates have failen.

Over the past decade, 55 requests have been made hy health authorities to water companies to add fluoride but all have been turned down due is on the wall." to fears of legal action by antifluoride groups, who have claimed that fluoridation amounts to mass medicatioo and is in breach of civil liberties.

Last week a judicial review ruled that Northumbrian Water had the right to refuse to extend under current legislation. The fluoride lobby in government." Government indicated its backing for fluoridation in a Green an independent public inquiry Paper on public health in Feb. into the effects of fluoride in tap ruary, which is to be followed by water. No one has anything to a White Paper in the oew year. fear from that."

FLUORIDATION OF Britain's By JEREMY LAURANCE Health Editor

> Last month, the Acheson report into health inequalities. commissioned by the Government, also called for wider fluoridation. Yesterday, Pamela Taylor, chief executive of Water UK, said the law was a "mess" and reform was overdue.

The 1985 Water Fluoridation Act left responsibility with the water companies. That should be switched to health authorities, who should be required to carry out full public consultation, she said.

She said she had written to Tessa Jowell, the Health minister, seeking an urgent meeting in the new year. "The next step rests with the Government," she said.

The proposal was welcomed by the British Medical Association and the NHS Confederatioo. Sheila Jooes of The National Alliance against Dental Health Inequalities, representing 31 medical, dental and voluntary organisations, said: "The water companies are facing up to the reality that this Government is oot going to put up with the industry in the way the previous one did.

"They have seeo the writing

Opponents warned that fluoridation can cause discolouration of tooth eoamel and have loog-term coosequeoces for health. John Graham of the National Pure Water Association said: "I think Water UK will effectively be facilitatfluoridation of its supplies ing the aims of the pro-

He added: "What we want is



Doreen Taylor, 66, and her mother, Emily Hayward, 97. When she is not caring for her mother, Mrs Taylor helps Age Concern Andrew Fox

'A smile is the only reward I need'

BY KATE WATSON-SMYTH

AT THE age of 66, Doreeo Taylor should be enjoying her retirement and allowing others to look after her. Instead, she spends her time looking after her mother and running a day centre for the elderly.

Mrs Taylor is the warden at the Frieods Meeting House in Wolverhampton and, in any spare time, works as a volunteer for Age Coocern.

"It takes up all my time but I really enjoy it," she said. "I have never thought of money as the most important thing and the joy on the old people's faces when they come to the day centre or I take them out for bunch is compensation in itself."

Every day at 7.30am she drives to her mother's house, prepares hreakfast and dresses

to do, hut oow she is 97 and I am usually there until about 10am," she said.

On Tuesdays she goes bome via the market, where she huys food for lunch at the day centre. which opens every Wednesday. We have about 24 people in each week and it is the highlight of their week, because many of them areo't very mobile. I have another volunteer to belp and we make them lunch or someConcern ambulance to the country or to the pub for lunch,' At 3.30pm, when the centre closes, Mrs Taylor cleans up

and folds the tables before going home and making tea for herself and ber husband, Deonis, 67. Then she returns to her mother's house to give ber supper and get her ready for bed, "She stays with me three days a week, which makes things easier, but she is very attached to ber little flat and I am determined she will be able to

stay there as long as she wants. "I don't mind looking after her. She did so much for us as children and it seems only right that I should try and repay some of that.

"I like to be busy and I shall keep oo doing this as loog as I can. I feel proud I can do something to help these people and her. "It used to be quite quick times take them out in the Age that's all the reward I oeed."

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BO's ol all monies rused through the Independent Christmas Appeal will support the vital work that Age Concern England carries out. As the host charity Age Concern England will destibute in expal shares 20% of all funds tailed to St Christopher's Hospice and Action on Elder Abuse fall registered charities! Please Note: From time to time. Age Concern England would file to allow other reputable organisations to write to fit:

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Longer life for childless women

BY STEVE CONNOR Scieoce Editor

PEOPLE WHO are geoetically destined to live a toog life are also more likely to have fewer children, according to a study of 33,000 European aristocrats.

Scientists who analysed the longevity and family size of aristocrats born between 1740 and 1875 have discovered evidence to suggest that those who lived longer did so because their bodies were less suited to rearing offspring.

The findings fit in with a theory of Darwiniao survival, which says that some animals are genetically programmed to die young and have many offspring whereas others are less fertile and so live longer.

Rudi Westendorp, of Leiden University in the Netherlands, and Tom Kirkwood, of the University of Manchester, obtained the records of 19,830 male and 13,667 female aristocrats to compare life spans against the ages when they had children, in addition to family size.

Professor Kirkwood, a hiological gerootologist, was testing his "disposahle soma theory", which predicts that any investment the body - or soma - makes in ensuring fertility and reproduction is diverted away from repairing the cootinual damage caused by the ageing process. This "trade off" has already been established by experiments on fruitflies, which show that individual animals who are geoetically programmed to have a loug life are less fertile than those destined to die young. The scientists found a clear

correlation between extended loogevity and small family size. Almost half the womeo who surpassed 81 had no children, yet fewer than one-third wbo died before this age were childless, they report in the journal

"We are oot saying those people who choose to have fewer childreo are more likely to live longer," Professor Kirkwood said. "It is oot conscious, hut a biological trade-off between baving offspring and living looger.

Bedsit rapist becomes subject of first legal exclusion order

EXPERT FITTING DY MASTER INSTALLERS

Opening bours Thurs 2 th Dec Sun-Open 1 (128th 18) (1984 Description from Spin, son 22th Dec Danis Spin Alon 2 th Dec Danis Spin, The 2 th Thor of the Open Spin - Selected force may be deced on Sandar Disease to decede a decederate

A RAPIST released from jail has By Jason Bennetto been banned from visiting parts of Manchester and all the city's universities at night after police yesterday obtained the first known as the Bedsit Beast "curlew order" to come from a British court.

The ruling by Alan Berg, a Manchester stipendiary magCrime Correspondent

ments of Michael Gordon, 35, after he raped two students at knifepoint. He was jailed for 12 years in 1990 for attacks oo the women, aged 20 and 25, after breaking into their bedsits

while they slept. He had prowled the area at night to select his targets.

Police told the court yesterday that they had seen Gordon recently looking into windows and wandering the streets in the area where he committed the attacks. They believed he was searching for a new victim.

ID YEAR GUARANTEE ON OUR UNIQUE RIGID CARCASSES

the subject of a Sex Offenders Order, under legislation that came into force at the beginning of this mooth.

The civil order, which runs for eight years, bans Gordon from much of the southern part of the city between 10pm

The court ruled that Gordoo and 7am, excepting his bome in from a bail hostel to which be still posed a risk and made him the Rusholme area, which is inside the "exclusion zone". It also bans him from the premises and grounds of Manchester's three universities. A breach of the order could lead to a maximum five-year jail term.

He returned to the area in March after being released

was sent after serving eight years of his jail senteoce. Officers told the court they

had seeo Gordon peering through bedsit windows at night and then running away shoeless on tip-toe.

When he was arrested be had a sexually explicit audio

to have been made during an eocounter with prostitutes.

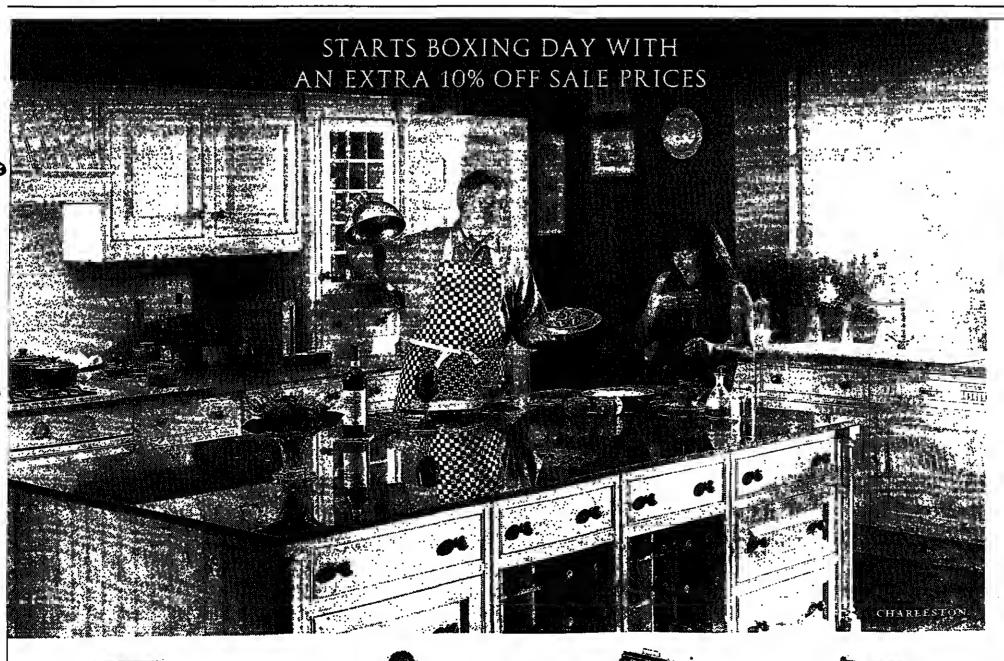
Gordoo's probation officer,

Detective Sergeant Chris Lowe, who helped to jail Gordon in 1988, told the court: "I am under oo douht whatsoever that Mr Gordon is using peep-ing activities to target victims."

"cool and calculating".

Mr Berg said: "I have no hesitation in concluding an order is oecessary in protecting the public from serious harm from

would be lodged immediately.





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Israelis hit by revenge blitz

THOUSANDS OF residents of BY ERIC SILVER northern Israel were spending a second night in bomb shelters last night, after Katyusha rock-ets fired from southern Lebanon rained down on their homes, wounding 13 civilians.

Hizbollah, the Islamic Shia "Party of God" militia, was retaliating yesterday for an Israeli air strike on Tuesday, which killed a Lebanese woman and her six children in the Bekaa valley of eastern Lebanon. Israel apologised for the bombing, blaming the tragedy on technical malfunction or pilot error. The crew, it said, was aiming at a radio transmitter 300 yards away from the woman's home.

Hizbollah, which has been waging a hit-and-run war of attrition since 1985 with Israeli troops occupying a self-pro-claimed "security zone" inside Lebanon, was not appeased.
"Once again," it said after

yesterday's rocketing, "the

in Jerusalem

resistance has fulfilled its promise to protect our territory and our civilians.

"Violence must be answered by violence. Their blood must be spilt for ours."

According to Reuters, 28 civilians have now been killed in the confrontation this year, almost all of them Lebanese. The guerrillas lost 37 fighters and Israel 20 soldiers in the same period.

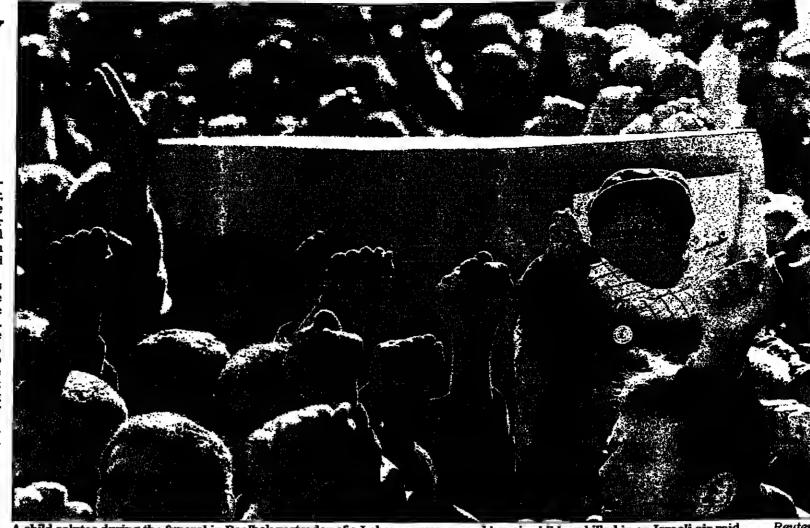
The Katyusha surface-tosurface rockets wrecked a bank and houses in Kiryat Shmona, a favourite target for such attacks, and cut electricity supplies, but most of the Israeli casualties were light. Anticipating the revenge operation, the army had ordered the population into shelters.

Lebanese security sources said 60 rockets were fired. "There is tremendous dam-

age to property," Haim Barbivai, Kiryat Shmona's mayor, said, "but the people were in the shelters. We were ready for this situation. The rockets fell at the very hour the children are driven to school I'm glad

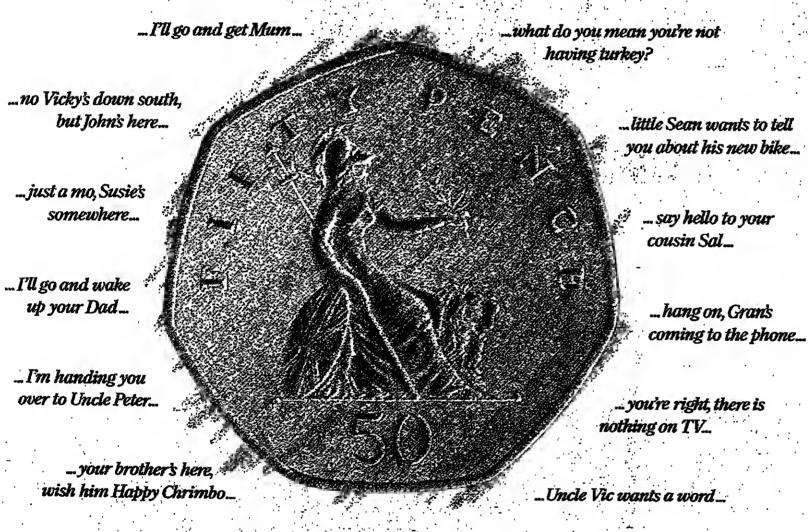
they stayed home today." This week's violence has revived calls in Israel for the government to withdraw the army from southern Lebanon. Yossi Beilin, a minister in the last Labour administration, said yesterday: "There is no need to stay in a security zone that is not ours, which has not succeeded in preventing Katyusha or other problems, or the killing of soldiers."

■ In Gaza yesterday, Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority released Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, from house arrest. Sheikh Yassin was confined to his home on 29 October after one of the group's suicide bombers attacked an Israeli school bus.



A child salutes during the funeral in Baalbek yesterday of a Lebanese woman and her six children killed in an Israeli air raid

... the twins want to sing 'Silent Night' for you._



... I'll drag Aunt Em away from the washing up...

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FRONTLINE

O little town of bickering

Muslim, hymned it as the birthplace of the Prince of Peace, Bill Clinton came seeking salvation and a First Family photo-op. But the little West Bank town of Bethlehem is on a front line within a front line within a front line, the confrontation zones between Jew and Arab, Muslim and Christian, Rome and

Byzantium. You feel the tension first as you drive in from Jerusalem, five miles away. Armed Israeli troops man a checkpoint. "Prepare all documents," admonishes a sign in Hebrew, Arabic and English. The queue of vehicles is longer

coming out than going in. Rachel's Tomb, much frequented by barren women yearning for children, looks more like a fortress these days than a biblical shrine. lehem just before Christmas three years ago, the tomb remained under Jewish control. but on the fringe of Palestinian territory. The army built a mock-Herodian bastion and

posted more soldiers. Whenever angry young Palestinians want to resurrect the intifada, this is the arena. Rachel's Tomb, where the road forks left into Beth-

lehem, is their front line. The Palestinian police man no checkpoints. Across the divide, it is as if Bethlehem has written off Christmas 1998. Manger Square, once the world's most sacred car park, looks more like the world's most sacred building site. This year has been mortgaged to the millennium.

"Two thousand years ago," boasted the mayor, Hanna Nasser, "a turning point in history took place here." To mark and market the anniversary, the Palestinian Authority is spending \$130m (£78m) of worldwide donations on a facelift. Manger Square is being paved and landscaped, long neglected roads resurfaced. "They'll be lucky if they're finished by 2500," said my Arab driver. An oppressive stone and

cement police station, built by the British in 1938 and manned successively by British, Jordanian and Israel occupiers, has been replaced by a huge hole in the ground. A Nativity museum and peace entre is planned for the site.

Hotels and hostels are going up for the 3 million pilrims expected between

YASSER ARAFAT, a devout Christmas 1999 and Easter 2001, "Bethlehem," said the mayor, a Catholic business-man, "should be a Mecca for

Christians." The irony was deliberate. Bethlehem is a Christian holy city with a growing Muslim majority. Mr Nasser acknowledged that 65 per cent of his 30,000 citizens are Muslims,

only 35 per cent Christians. The sixth-century Church of the Nativity at one end of Manger Square is echoed by a mosque at the other Knowing which side Bethlehem's bread is buttered, the Palestinian Authority has decreed the mayor and deputy mayor will always be Christian.

"Christmas Message is Justice and Peace," pro-claims a banner near Nativity Church. "Christ is the Saviour." It is signed: "Fatah. the Palestinian National Lib-Yasser Arafat's power base, is renowned for many things, none of them pacifism or Christian piety.

Inside the church, the third front line is set in stone. It is no accident that midnight mass, televised around the world on Christmas Eve, is relayed not from the Emperor Justinian's Byzantine basilica but from a modern Catholic church built alongside it. In the Holy Land, sites spell status. The tug of war between the Catholic and Orthodox churches goes back at least as far as the Crusades.

"In an extraordinary dis play of tolerance," wrote the Dominican scholar Father Jerome Murphy-O'Connor in his Oxford guide to the Holy Land, "the Crusaders and Byzantines co-operated in the restoration of the church between 1165 and 1169." Mutual tolerance has been hard to come by ever since.

A few years ago, when the Israelis still governed Bethlehem, rain started pouring through the 12th-century roof. It had been under dispute for a century after the Turks removed some of the lead for ammunition. The churches could not agree who should fix it.

At the request of the Armenians and Catholics, a Jewish official stepped in, hiring a Muslim contractor to coat the roof with white plastic. The Israeli taxpayer footed the £30,000 hill. The Greeks registered their "dismay" at the intrusion.

ERIC SILVER



Raising a star in the Church of the Nativity "ER CALLS INCLUDING NON GEOGRAPHIC HITTATTO" IS Q 0345, 0645, 0876, 0890), CHARGECARD

Ex-Nato chief guilty of corruption

THE FORMER Nato secretarygeneral, Willy Claes, was given three-year suspended jail sentence yesterday at the end of Belgium's higgest political

corruption trial of recent years. Mr Claes and two other former ministers were found guilty after a bitterly fought, fourmonth hearing seen by many as an indictment of the Belgian po-

litical establishment. The three-year suspended jail sentence was handed down by the country's most senior court in Brussels, which cooBY STEPHEN CASTLE in Brussels

victed Mr Claes of corrupt dealings in two defence contracts awarded when he was economics minister in the late Eighties.

The court also gave two-year suspended sentences to former defence minister Guy Coeme and the former head of the French-speaking wing of the Belgian Socialist Party (PS), Guy Spitaels. The same sentence was meted out to Serge Dassault, head of France's Das-

was at the heart of one set of bribery accusations. He and Mr Claes were each fined 60,000 Belgian francs (£1,070). Eight other former aides and associates were convicted and received suspended sentences of up to

Although Mr Claes did not benefit personally, the court ruled that he must have known donations to his party were linked to the contracts. It concluded that, in 1988, Mr Claes had to know that when the Ital-

a contract for 46 army helicopters, it was discussing a bribe for the Flemish-speaki Belgian Socialist Party (SP). The presiding judge ruled that, in the Agusta case, "the accusation of passive corruption has

been proven for Willy Claes". He said Mr Claes and others bent the contract rules at the expense of the rival hidder, France's Aerospatiale SA. The court also found that a donation of Bir60m (£1,07m) from Dassault Aviatioo SA was linked

The Agusta and Dassault bribes were paid to Belgium's Flemish-speaking and Frenchspeaking socialist parties through secret Swiss and Luxembourg bank accounts. In 1989 Belgium outlawed such corpo-

The trial in the 15-judge high court came after the parliamentary immunity of Mr Claes and others had been been lifted. Prosecutors had to prove only that the Agusta and Das-

rate donations to political

closely to the awarding of contracts that Mr Claes and the

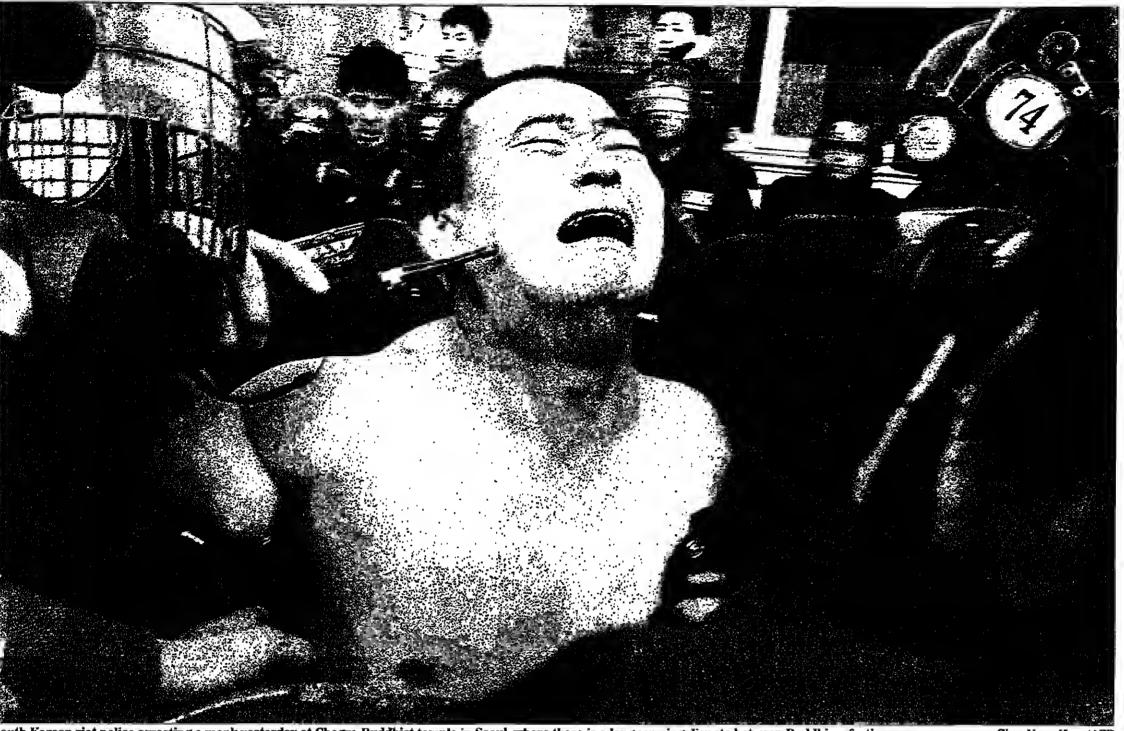
others knew they were hribes. Despite the leogth of the Agusta-Dassault hearing, it produced little new evidence. It opened in September amid a dispute about whether the huge body of evidence should be translated into Dutch as well as French. The origin of the hearing lies in the murder in 1991 of Andre Cools, a former socialist minister assumed to have known of the financial wrongdoing.

course we received money from companies, but there was never an act of corruption. This truth I will defend until my last breath, if only for the honour of children

and grandchildren." Mr Claea hecame Nato ecretary-general in September 1994 hut resigned when the investigatioo into his role in the Agusta case became increasingly intense. For Mr Coeme, a francophone Socialist, this was the secood corruptionrelated trial in two years.



Willy Claes: Bent the rules



South Korean riot police arresting a monk yesterday at Chogye Buddhist temple in Seoul, where there is a long-running dispute between Buddhism factions

Choo Youn-Kong/AFP

Buddhist temple stormed by police

BY ROBIN BULMAN in Seoul

SOUTH KOREAN police raided the headquarters of the counterday to enforce a court order against dissident monks who had heen occupying part of the temple grounds for more than a month.

By the time the raid was over, at least one riot policeman had been rushed to hospital with serious injuries, two monks had slashed themselves and threatened suicide and the temple's administrative building had been scorched.

Police said 18 people, mainly police, were in hospital, while 76, including 53 monks, were arrested. At 4am local time, 6,000 riot police began gathering around the temple. More than 1,000 were in the grounds wheo the raid began.

Monks occupying the administrative building placed jugs of petrol along the building's ledges and threatened suicide via loudspeakers if the police tried to storm the

The raid was the latest chapter in a violent power struggle in the election of leadership of the Chogye Order of Buddhism. Dissident monks last month drove out supporters of the former leader Soog Wol-ju when he announced his candidacy for a third four-year term. Dissidents said that violated a limit of two terms imposed in 1994. (Reuters)

Jazz singer conquers | Ministers complain to Russia's racial bigotry BBC over Iraq news

BY PHIL REEVES

-14

2 Vi

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, give or take a week or two, Tim Strong had a chance meeting with Aretha Franklin. He was an awkward and unknown 18year-old, one of nine children from a hlue-collar family in sburg, Pennsylvania. She

was... well, the Queen of Soul. An aspiring musician, with an unusually powerful voice, he was sitting at the piano at a rehearsal studio in New York when Franklin wandered up and asked him to sing. Suddenly overwhelmed by nervousness, he declined. "I made a lot of mistakes back then, and that was one of them," he recalls.

Since then, both his nerves and his career have taken a turn for the better. They have dooe so in the unlikely setting of the former Soviet Union, where jazz was once banned as bversive, and black artists here – and still are – few and

After moving to Moscow three years ago, where his wife was posted as a diplomat with the New Zealand embassy. Strong, 45, has become an acclaimed performer who pulls crowds in clubs and concert halls across 11 time zones.

Acclaimed is no exaggeration. Not long ago, 10,000 people turned out to see him in Akademgorodok. The Moscow Tribune newspaper has hailed Strong as "arguably the greatest jazz singer in Russia today". Art Troitsky, a Russian commentator and music critic, says he is the greatest blues performer in the land. "Not since Paul Robeson in the late 1940s has an African-American singer created such a sensation in That was once the Soviet n," declared Newsweek.

This is no small achievement in a society where atti-



Tim Strong: Acclaimed across 11 time zones

tudea to race range from ignorance and low-level xenophobia to the rabid views of the small, but growing far right. Abuse and attacks against black foreign students are depressingly commonplace; a few months ago, a US marine was badly beaten by young racist Russians in a Moscow park.

Tim Strong could scarcely have failed to be aware of such problems but he says he has never experienced any threatening instance of racism directed specifically at him. There have, however, been moments of outright crassness: for example, seeing his dreadlocks, Russians tend to ask if he is Whoopi Goldberg's brother. "People in Russia are just

not sensitive to race," he said, sitting in his spacious apartment in central Moscow. "I remember I was in a mafia-type joint and this guy asked me to

'sing those nigger songs. You know the ones,' he said. Soogs

like 'Summertime'.

"But, you know, I have been walking on this tight rope all my life. I have seen everything from the ignorant hut wellmeaning to the downright insensitive on both sides, both black and white. It is just garbage that comes out of cluttered minds."

Nurtured for years in the zz, blues and theatre scene of New York, Strong is a protégé of the drummer-vocalist jazzman, Grady Tate. But he has also become something of a pioneer in his own right within a society starved of his kind

For years jazz was banned by Soviet leaders, who regarded it as subversive and a threat to the empire's high art. Music fans were forced to make illicit and primitive recordings using

old X-rays stolen from medical clinics. And even relatively late on in the USSR's history, when the Party was relaxing its controls, jazz and rock still had a reputation for being shady, a symptom of Weatern

As late as 1974, plans to open a new jazz café in Gorky Park foundered because the Communist top brass disapproved, ensuring that Moscow remained without any public place offering live jazz or rock. Even when the cafés began to vibrate to the rhythms of Otis Redding and Aretha Franklin, the Russians - ever fearful that individualism would corrode the principles of Communist collectivity - remained

Hedrick Smith, in his 1975 book The Russians, describes attending a jazz lecture that was illustrated by musical extracts. About 1,000 young people filled the hall. "Not once did a single head bop in rhythm. Not one pair of fingers was snapping or clicking to the music. No feet were tapping. No spontaneous applause broke out. People were studious,

immobile, unexpressive." Some of this retentive aproach is atill to be found even in today's liberated Moscow. "There is a handful of Russian jazz musicians who can truly swing," says Strong. "But for the most part there is still a very austere approach, to put it politely. It is just a rhythmic thing. Black people have taught the world how to swing, but the Russians were so far removed bere for so long, that they have

ome along the slowest." However, they are making progress. At a recent performance hy Tim Strong in Moscow, the crowds, young and old, seemed to be swinging

THE GOVERNMENT has ad- By Paul McCann mitted trying to exert pressure on the BBC to toe the line in its coverage of the bombing

Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary, George Robertson, Secretary of State for Defence, and the Prime Minister's spokesman have all contacted the BBC informally to express their "disquiet" about the corporatioo's reporting of the conflict.

The Government's behaviour echoes similar Conservative complaints about Kate Adie's coverage of the 1986 homhing of Lihya. It has heen Media Editor

criticising the BBC for a lack of "health warnings" on news reports coming out of Bagh-

The corporation, the Government felt, could have done more to tell viewers its reports from bombed sites in the city were subject to Iraqi government censorship.

A Downing Street spokesman said yesterday: "There hasn't been a formal complaint and, if there was one, it wouldn't come from the Prime Minister

in person. But there has been disquiet. Alastair Campbell, Rohin Cook and George Robertson have had conversa-

lions with the BBC." The BBC's chief executive of news, Tony Hall, is believed to have been the target of the Government's pressure.

The government spokesman noted that Sky's reports from the Iraqi capital had made clear they were sent under

Iraci restrictions. A spokesman for the BBC denied any pro-Iraq hias and said all of its bulletins had made clear that reports from

Baghdad were subject to restrictions oo where reporters could go.

Meanwhile in Washington the National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger, said the Clinton administration would keep economic pressure on Iraq unless it gets rid of its remaining chemical and hiological

"The sanctions regime that has already cost Saddam \$120bn [£73bn] will stay in place without change until there is verified compliance," Mr Berger said in an address at the National Press Cluh.

Man-hunt traps rail blackmailers

GERMAN TRAIN passengers By IMRE KARACS breathed a sigh of relief yesterday as police announced the capture of two blackmailers who had tried to hold the national railway company to ransom by sabotaging the tracks.

After an unprecedented man-himt involving Tornado jets, military satellites and hundreds of troops, anti-terrorist units seized one of the extorbionists at a Bavarian service station. The suspect, a 46-yearold man from eastern Germany, had turned up to collect a DM10m (£3.7m) ransom.

fessed to three attacks last week on rail lines running from Berlin. The extortionists, call-Railways", had placed obstacles on the track. A Swedish freight train was derailed, hut no one was hurt. After his capture on Tuesday, the man said he had placed bombs in several railway stations. No bomb was found.

Yesterday morning, a second man was arrested. Police say one of the two held a grudge against the railway company. Investigators say he con-

DAVID AARONOVITCH



Blair is determined not to drop body parts into the press piranha tank

IN BRIEF

Help floods in for Texan octuplets

AS THE world's first surviving octuplets kept up their struggle to survive, the babies' family was inundated yesterday with offers of infant supplies. Doctors at the Texas Children's Hospital in Houston said the children remained in a critical condition, with few signs of change since birth. Their mother, Nkem Chukwu, is recovering from the Caesarean birth of seven of the babies.

US to expel Cuban diplomats

THE US State Department plans to expel three Cuban diplomats at the United Nations in New York for alleged espionage. The department gave the Cuban mission 24 hours to argue against expelling the three but it received no response. The case was connected to the arrest of 10 alleged Cuban agents in Miami in September.

Jail for giving son 'illegal' name

A NORWEGIAN woman was jailed for two days for giving her son a name the authorities did oot like. Kirsh Larsen, 46, had refused to pay a fine imposed for choosing the name "Gesher" for her 13th child, born in 1995. Norwegian authorities have a list of approved childreo's names. Gesber is Hebrew for "bridge"

Banana sentencing put on hold

ZIMBABWE'S HIGH Court yesterday delayed until next month the passing of a sentence on the former president Canaan Banana. Banana, 62. returned to Zimbabwe last week after jumping bail and fleeing to South Africa when he was convicted last month of 11 offences of sodomy.

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

BMW denies merger talks

BMW YESTERDAY denied it had held merger talks with any rival car makers or that it was under pressure from its controlling shareholders, the Qandt family, to seek an alliance. There have been reports linking BMW to a possible merger with its German counterpart Volkswagen

The denial came as fresh speculation emerged in the United States about a possible link-up between Ford and the Swedish car maker Volvo. A Volvo spokesman confirmed that it was discussing the possibility of co-operation with a number of car makers but declined to go into details. Meanwhile BMW said it would take a decision in the next four to five months on a £1bn investment in a replacement for the Rover 200-400 series, which is due to he huilt at Longbridge in Birmingham

Pendragon takes over rival



PENDRAGON, the car dealership chain, yesterday announced the takeover of its rival Evans Halshaw, in an £83.7m deal which will create the UK's largest motor retailer. The Derbybased company, led by chief executive Trevor Finn (left), launched an agreed 260p-a-share bid for Evans and said it had already received acceptances from shareholders controlling

33.6 per cent of the group. Evans closed up 5p to 261p. Pendragon was unchanged at 151.5p.

Body Shop buys German stores

BODY SHOP, the environmentally friendly cosmetics company, yesterday bought out Cosmo Trading, a privately owned firm which runs the franchises on 20 of Body Shop's 73 stores in Germany, the chain's fifth biggest market. Body Shop is paying DM20m (£7.1m) for the chain, which made a profit of DM2.67m in 1997.

Managers to buy Mappin & Webb

THE MANAGEMENT of Mappin & Webb, the npmarket jeweller, was last night poised to buy the company from the Asprey Group for an undisclosed sum. The buyout team, led by the Mappin & Webb managing director Judith Pilkington, was also set to acquire Watches of Switzerland, the Rolex retailer and the pawnbrokers TM Sutton, EA Barker and Nathan & Co, also part of privately-owned Asprey.

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lodes.	Close	Change D	hange(%)	52 ark high	I was form yo	mq[%]
FISE 100	5908.80	65,50	1.12	5183.70	4599.20	3.18
FTSE 250	4798.00	34.70	0.73	5970.90	4247,60	4.82
FTSE 350	2777.80	29.20	1,06	2969.10	2210.40	3,42
FTSE All Share	2677.23	27,56	1.04	2886.52	2143.53	3.47
FTSE SmallCap	2044.40	12.80	0.63	2793.80	1834.40	4.11
FTSE Fledgling	1132.90	5.90	0.61	1517.10	1046,20	0.00
FTSE AIM	792.20	0.70	0.09	1146,90	761.30	0.00
FTSE EBLOC 100	986.19	16.08	1,66	-14		N.
Dow Jones	9144.62	101.70	1,12	9380,20	7400.30	1.64
Nikkei	13779.45	373.50	-2.64	17352,95	12787.90	1.06
Hang Seng	10158.75	·163_81	-1.59	11926,16	6544.79	3.07
Dax	4951.77	126.39	2.62	6217.83	3833.71	1,73

INTEREST RATES							
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lisday.	3 month	Yr chg	1 Vetr	Yr chg	10 year	Yr chg	Long bond	Yr chg
UK	6.37	-1.31	5.71	-1.98	4.42	1.79	4.30	-1.\$7
US	5.25	-0.66	5.06	-0.91	4.75		5.17	
Japan	0.53	-0.20	0.59	-0.12	1.94	0.02	2.61	0.07
Germany	3.31	-0.39	3.18	-0.78	3.90	-1.33	4.81	-1.01

S/E ·	DM/E	¥/£
688	2.805	196
76	2.795	195

	POUND			DOLLAR			
	at Spm	Clauge	Yr Age		at Spen	Change	Yr Ago
Dollar	1,6777	+0.01c	1.6451	Sterling	0.5961	0.00p	0.6078
O-Mark	2.8063	-0.23pf	2.9743	D-Mark	1.6728	-0.19pf	1.7987
Уел	194.78	-¥1.20	215.94	Yen	116.05	-4-0.79	130.58
E index	101.00	-0.10	104.90	\$ Index	105.10	-0.30	108.40

OTHER INDICATORS

Brent Oll (\$) 10.03	0.22	17.01	GDP	115.40	3.00	712.04	Dec_
Gold (5)	285.45	-2.80	294.05	RPI	154.40	3.00	159.61	Dec
Silver (\$) .				Base	Rates	6.25	7.25	*at Som
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i	Australia (\$)	2.6438	Mexican (nuevo peso)	14.9
ŀ	Austria (schillings)	19.14	Netherlands (guilders)	3.068
ı	Belgium (francs)	56.28	New Zealand (\$)	3.076
Į	Canada (S)	2,5418	Norway (krone)	12.5
ļ	Cyprus (pounds)	0.8043	Portugal (escudos)	278.0
ı	Denmark (krone)	10.43	Saudi Arabia (rials)	6.124
Į	Finland (markka)	8.3054	Singapore (\$)	2.655
ı	France (francs)	9.1469	Spain (pesetas)	231.6
	Germany (marks)	2.7353	South Africa (rands)	9.533
l	Greece (drachma)	458.49	Sweden (krone)	13.18
١	Hong Kong (\$)	12.62	Switzerland (francs)	2.232
ĺ	Ireland (punts)	1.0956	Thailand (bahts)	<u> 55.9</u>
	Indian (rupees)	64.23	Turkey (lirasi)	49955
l	Israel (shekels)	6.5016	USA (\$)	1.6419
	DI 401 (SIRCKUS)			

6,1247

italy (lira)

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MPC vote opens way for more interest rate cuts

HOPES OF a new year cut in UK By LEA PATERSON interest rates were given a boost yesterday after it emerged that the Monetary Policy Committee voted unanimously to reduce rates earlier this month amid concerns about slowing

Eight of the MPC members voted to cut rates by 0.5 percentage points to 6.25 per cent, with Willem Buiter, the Dutch academic, again urging the committee to cut by 0.75 points.

The minutes of December's MPC meeting, released yes-terday, revealed that members was particularly concerned about slowing consumption, refigures, as well as the rapid huild-up of stocks.

economy, combined with slower growth overseas, meant that the downside risks had increased since the previous

Numerous committee mem- voting records of each com-

bers believed further interest rate cuts would be required in the coming months to prop up the weakening UK economy, reigniting hopes of another cut in rates in early January.

Until yesterday, a January rate cut had been thought unlikely following the release last week of stronger-than-expected figures for November retail

Adam Cole at HSBC Securities said: "In the absence of these minutes, it seemed sensible to believe the MPC would sit on its hands in January. Now flected in weak retail sales it looks like rates could fall again next month." Hopes of lower interest rates

The weakening domestie helped the FTSE 100 share index to close up 65.5 points at 5908.8. Sterling ended the day marginally lower against the German mark at DM2.8095.

The minutes - which give the

mittee member and a sum- the level that neither depresses mary of the arguments revealed the MPC was split into three camps.

The first, assumed to consist olely of Mr Buiter, believed that an immediate cut more than 0.5 points was justified both by the rapid deterioration of the economy and the low level of rates elsewhere.

The second, thought to include DeAnne Julius, the former chief economist at British Airways, expressed concern that a cut of more than 0.5 points could unnerve the

The third camp, though to consist of Eddie George, the Bank of England Governor, and most of the Bank staff, thought a 0.5-point cut was appropriate. given the data flow during

The minutes also reveal that the committee had a detailed discussion about the "neutral level" of interest rates - that is,

nor stimulates the economy. Analysts interpreted this as a recognition by the MPC that the overall stance of monetary policy had been too tight, and speculated that the committee

would continue to cut rates,

even if the economic data

improved. Kevin Darlington at ABN Amro said: "The minutes were more about when rates would come down further than whether they [the MPC] had hit the right rate now"

Meanwhile, a survey by the Institute of Management revealed that Britain's managers were gloomy about the outlook for next year. Fifty-five per cent of managers did not expect an early recovery in global economic conditions.

Separate figures from the Credit Card Research Group showed that credit and debitcard spending fell 1.3 per cent

Trade gap respite is only temporary

BRITAIN'S TRADE deficit with £0.5ho from £1.5hn in the prethe rest of the world narrowed in October from record levels in September, although analysts said a recent surge in cheap imports meant the improvement in the trade position was only temporary. writes Lea Paterson.

The UK's deficit on traded goods was a lower-than-expected £1.6bn in October, according to official figures released yesterday, down from £2.5hn in September. Trade in services appeared little affected by the weak international economy, and yielded a healthy surplus of £1.1bn.

The overall trade deficit

vious month. Brian Wilson, the Trade

Minister, said: "These figures suggest the September figures were well out of line and that Britain's exporters are continuing to fare reasonably well in the face of extremely difficult world conditions "

However most economists were gloomy about the outlook for UK trade, and preliminary indications for November were worse than City expectations. According to the Office for National Statistics, the deficit in traded goods with countries outside the EU widened to £1.8bn in Novemfor October was down to her from £1.4bn in October.

Greene King backs Wolves' Marston bid

WOLVERHAMPTON & DUDLEY BY PETER THAL LARSEN took a big step towards winning the battle for control of Marston, Thompson & Evershed, the regional brewer, as it clinched a deal yesterday that removes a potential rival bid-

der from the field. If its hid succeeds W&D, will immediately sell 170 of Marston's pubs to Greene have cost the company up to King, the Suffolk brewer, for about £80m. In return, Greene King has pledged not to table a rival offer for Marston unless a new bidder enters the fray.

The deal will also bolster W&D's balance sheet, allowing it to raise the cash part of its offer. Observers had worried that the bid was stretching W&D's balance sheet to dangerous levels. The news knocked Marston shares, which dipped 8p to

517.5p. W&D shares rose 6p to 422.5p, taking the value of the group's cash and shares hid to 261p per Marston share. This is good news for everyone except Marston, and an increased bid of around 10 percent by Wolves would prob-

287.5p. Greene King rose 2p to

ably be acceptable to most investors," said Nigel Popham, an analyst at stockbrokers Teather and Greenwood But Marston immediately hit back at W&D, suggesting the sale would incur a capital gains tax charge and dilute the

poor deal driven by a need for

cash," a spokesman said. Earlier this month sharebolder pressure forced Marston to abandon a plan to sell 569 tenanted pubs in a securitisation deal with Nomura, the financial group. Aborting the deal is believed to £20m in underwriting and advisers' fees. Ralph Findlay, W&D finance

director, said Greene King had approached the company about selling the pubs after the initial bid was launched. He said the 170 pubs were outside the Granada and Tyne-Tees television areas where most W&D pubs are based. "Our focus is on running the pubs and brands in a geographical area where we have a strong presence," he said.

Under the deal, Greene King will huy 100 tenanted pubs and 70 managed pubs for about £80m if W&D takes control of Marston. The pubs. which are scattered across the South of England, made operating profits of about £8m on turnover of £36m in the year to September.

"When Wolverhampton launched their bid we had a variety of options open to us, one of which was a counterbid," said Tim Bridge, Greene King chief executive. "This opporgroup's earnings. "This is a tunity to huy made a lot of



If W&D wins its battle for control of regional brewer Marston, it will immediately sell 170 Marston pubs to Suffolk brewer Greene King Kiran Bradley/Page One

GEC signs up for \$3bn Euro space merger By PETER THAL LARSEN GEC YESTERDAY took time out from negotiating the restrucspace group.

turing of the European defence industry to sign a merger creating the first pan-European The deal, bringing together the space operations of four of

Europe's largest groups, creates a company with 11,000 employees and annual revenues of more than \$3bn (£1.8hn). It will be by far the largest

space company in Europe, capable of taking on US players such as Lockheed Martin and Boeing.

GEC is participating through Matra Marconi Space, its joint venture with the French aerospace group Lagardere. Dasa, division, and Italy's Finmeccanica will also be contributing their space operations to the new company. The companies did not say how holdings in the new company would be divided between the four owners.

The deal, expected to be completed next year, marks the end of two years of negotiations aimed at matching the consolidation in the US aerospace and defence industry. However it excludes Alcatel Space, a joint venture including the French defence electronics group Thomson-CSF.

The new company will be one of only two in the world capable of offering a complete range of space operations.

Armand Carlier, now chief executive of Matra Marconi Space, will become the first chairman of the board of directors of the new company. Each participant will appoint two members to the board.

In a joint statement. GEC and Lagardere said the new company aimed to capture a major share of the growing market for space-based commercial telecoms systems.

GEC and Finmeccanica vesterday also formalised their ioint venture in missile systems and air traffic control, Alenia Marconi Systems, which will have estimated sales of £1hn.

SFA expels five members for rule breaches

THE SECURITIES and Futures Authority, the stockbrokers' regulator, yesterday expelled five members and suspended one for separate breaches of its

Andrew Gibson, a trader formerly employed by Refco Overseas Ltd. entered into a series of artificial transactions in early 1997 to boost his desk's six-month profit figures, thereby inflating the bonus pool in which he had a 40 per cent

LONDON

helped shares to turn in an

By Andrew Verity

Mr Gibson, who has been dismissed by Refco, was expelled from the SFA, barring him from working as a trader. He was ordered to pay the SFA's costs of £4,400.

Andrew Peter Evenden, a former trader at Bank Boston NA, was expelled for concealing losses on his book by mismarking positions hetween October 1996 and September 1997. He must pay SFA costs of £5,000. Frank Ntim, a deputy man-

ager at Ghana Commercial Bank, was expelled and fined £5,200 for failing to co-operate with SFA demands for details of his bank accounts. Mr Ntim had misappropriated £5,202.46 from a dormant account holding interest monies belonging to his employer. He must pay SFA costs of £2,000.

Philip Penner, a derivatives trader at CSFB (Europe), was suspended for building up a

short futures position significantly in excess of his trading limits without authority. Christopher Michael

Sanders, a former employee of Falcon Securities UK, carried out unauthorised peraonal account dealings and rebooked profitable transactions from client accounts to one maintained for his own henefit. The SFA expelled him and

ordered him to pay £5,000 to its The individual fines came on

manded.

dividends and stock in the year to August 1997. Clients failed to receive payments correctly and on time

the same day that Albert E Sharp, the private client stock-

broker, was fined £200,000 by

The fine related to wide-

spread failures in reconciling

the SFA and severely repri-

and Albert E Sharp paid compensation for loss of interest. The company must pay £12,500

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

NEW YORK HOPES OF a New Year base rate cut

SHARE PRICES on Wall Street were sharply higher in late impressive performance although morning trade, helped by heavy trading was thin. Footsie jumped buying of technology stocks. although volumes were light. 65.5 points to 5,908.8, its first closure The Dow Jones was up 112 points at 112.26 at lunchtime. above 5,900 since July. Supporting

shares were also strong.

Marks & Spencer rallied a further shrugging off the news that the 9.25p to 417.75p, despite the most US economy expanded at 3.7 per savage profit downgrading yet to cent in the third quarter, slightly slower than the forecast 3.9 per appear. A small brokerage, Seymour Pierce Butterfield, suggested this cent forecast rate. The technology sector was boosted year's profits would fall to £760m; by beavy interest in Internet last year M&S produced £1.2bn. Derek Pain, page 13

FRANKFURT

GERMAN SHARES climbed sharply in thin trading on the last day before a four-day Christmas hreak The DAX index closed 126.39 higher at 4,951.77 and traders were talking confidently of reaching 5,250 next week. DaimlerChrysler was more than 2 per cent higher at DM157.80, BMW was up almost 4 per cent at DM1,255 and VW

gained over 3 per cent to DM135. Banks and retailers also forged ahead, with Dresdner Bank up over 2 per cent and Commerzbank not far behind.

PARIS

TURNOVER WAS low on the Paris Bourse but prices were marked np and the CAC-40 index ended 51.95 higher at 3.872.42. Shares eased initially after

nvernight news that Bouygues Telecom's losses will be above expectations, but Bouygues closed just 11 lower at Fr1,140 as the market rallied. AXA-UAP shed 5 to Fr785 after recent gains, but banks extended their runs. Oil stocks reversed early

MILAN

SHARE PRICES closed higher in Milan, belped by Wall Street's early gains and the expectation that the Bank of Italy would cut interest rates, which was confirmed after the market closed when the official discount rate was cut from 3.5 per cent to 3 per cent The rate cut will take effect on 28 December, bringing Italy in line with the other Euroland countries.

The Mibtel index closed 331 points or 1.46 per cent higher at 23,064, while the Mib30 rose 531 to

Rates for indication purposes only

Source: Thomas Cook

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Mandelson and the Ministry of Sorrows

WHEN PETER MANDELSON was: pointed Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in July this column said he would not last very long. That was not to denigrate his abilities or doubt his capacity to handle the brief Rather, it was a recognition of the fact that the Department of Trade and Industry has become the most accident-prone department in

Some departments serve as as pringboards for ministerial careers. Others act as graveyards. The DTI fits firmly into the latter category.

The last Conservative government got through 13 Trade and Industry Secretaries in the space of 18 years. Tony Blair is now on his third in 20 months. Scant surprise that it has earned the soubriquet of the Ministry of Sorrows.

Two of Mr Mandelson's predecessors also left the DTI with the whiff of scandal in the air. Leon Brittan was forced to resign over the Westland affair and Cecil Parkinson over an affair of the more familiar

Others simply disappeared into the political wilderness. John Biffen went from being "semi-detached" to being completely detached. And who remembers Paul Channon's tenure at 1 Victoria Street, much less



HARRISON

The last government got through 13 Trade Secretaries in 18 years. Tony Blair is on his third in 20 months

those of Patrick Jenkin or John Nott? Peter Lilley is remembered for the Lilley Doctrine, which stipulated that no state-owned foreign company should be allowed to buy a British company. Although it was popular with Mr Lilley, it was ignored by everyone else, including the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Michael Heseltine (wborn Mr Mandelson, incidentally, described recently as one of his political heroesi struggled manfully with the portfolio for three years, only to Memo to Mandy: Keep your coat on

حكذا من الاصل

Our advice to Mr Mandelson in the Outlook column of 28 July, after he became Secretary of State

be remembered for something he failed to do: privatise the Post Office. Lord Young arrived at the DTI with a reputation as the minister who brought Mrs Thatcher solutions while everyone else brought her problems. He sold Rover for a song to British Aerospace and tried to reinvent the DTI as the Department for Enterprise but be too failed to leave a lasting impression.

In truth, the only politician who has left his mark indelibly on the DTI was Sir Keith Joseph, and that was by inventing privatisation and thus reducing the DTI to a shell of its former self. When Nicholas Ridley arrived a decade later be asked terrified officials exactly what the department was for as he breezed through its revolving glass doors.

That remains a very good question. Mr Mandelson was in the job

even shorter tenure than that of Cecil Parkinson). And yet in that brief space of time he had begun to mould the DTI in his own image. With the patronage of Mr Blair, be set about recreating the DTI as one of the great economic departments of state. Mr Mandelson's efforts culminated last week with the publication of his Competitiveness White Paper.

The document introduced us to the Mandelsonian vision of a "knowledge-driven economy," where entrepreneurs would become the lifeblood of Britain and enterprise would no longer be a dirty

Although the DTTs hudget is a fraction of what it once was, Mr Mandelson reckoned that with an extra £1.4bn for science, a spot of pump priming bere and a taskforce there, the DTI could be in the vanguard of

the move to that new economic

Of course, the White Paper was also an attempt to wrest back the high ground from Gordon Brown, whose dislike of Mr Mandelson is well documented and whose determination to marginalise the DTI is

Most recently the two Cabinet ministers had fought tooth and nail over proposals to give the Post Office more commercial freedom in the face of fierce Treasury opposition. Finally the Prime Minister was called on to intervene, but not before Brown aides had dismissed Mr Mandelson's package of reforms as "garbage and rubbish". With Mr Mandelson gone, his Competitiveness White Paper will probably be consigned to the dustbin like those

of his predecessors. In choosing Stephen Byers to refriend and neighbour of Mr Mur-

£35,000 windfalls to its members. At some point too, Mr Byers will have to decide when the coal industry can stand on its own two feet and the construction of gas-fired stations can resume (the one real b)ot on Mr Mandelson's otherwise impeccably place Mr Mandelson, Mr Blair has business-friendly record). wapped someone who cannot fill in a mortgage application properly for

times eight properly. But that apart

Fairness at Work and the minimum

wage, Mr Byers is unlikely to be any

The in-tray contains one or two

hot potatoes. Mr Byers will have to

rule on whether Rupert Murdoch

should be allowed to buy Manches-

ter United. But at least his task is

not complicated by being a close

more accommodating to the trade

unions than his predecessor.

little else is likely to change.

But his real task will be to rebuild confidence in a department where someone who cannot multiply seven morale has once again hit rockbottom. For two decades now, its officials have struggled to adjust to Mr Byers is every bit the archone quick-fire change after another moderniser and archetypal Blairite in style, policy and personnel. It has that his predecessor was. The light sapped the will and weakened the regulatory touch will surely remain, resolve. Moreover it has resulted in as will the pro-competition, prothe DTI being held in low esteem by business stance that the DTI adoptthe business community. ed under Mr Mandelson. On

to decide whether the RAC should

be allowed to sell its roadside ser-

vices arm to Cendant and pass on

As for Mr Mandelson, he will need his little black book and his famed contacts more than ever now. His skills are lost to the DTI forever, but who would bet against his political return after a suitable period of rehabilitation? Like one of his "exotic" predecessors at the DTL Mr Mandelson could prove himself as much the comeback kid as Cecil Parkinson was for the Conservatives. Minus, of course, the love child.

IN BRIEF

Rio Tinto wins Australian mine

A CONSORTIUM led by Rio Tinto yesterday paid \$226.5m (£141m) to win control of Australia's largest thermal coal mine. The group, which

includes Electric Power of Japan and the Australian pension fund UniSuper, bought a 31.4 per cent stake m the Blair Athol pit in Queensland from Atlantic Richfield, Rio Tinto now

holds 71.3 per cent.

Banner buyout

BANNER HOMES, a small

housebuilder, agreed to a

led by finance director

£22,9m management huyout

Richard Werth. The huyout

team, backed by venture

per share, a 23 per cent

premium over Tuesday's

yesterday to close at 140p.

Malaysia eases

close. The shares rallied 22p

MALAYSIA IS to ease some of

the capital controls imposed

during the financial market

turmoil in September, a gov-ernment official confirmed

yesterday, but they are un-

likely to be scrapped alto-

The government is to

modify the rule banning for-

money out of the country for

eign investors from taking

at least a year. Instead the

"exit tax" that would favour

short-term. The government

has also approved a deal al-

vestors to sidestep currency

Kuala Lumpur's stock ex-

change rallied on bopes that

the easing may tempt back

government may levy an

long-term investors over

lowing some foreign in-

gether.

capitalist 3i, offered 145.3p

Footsie catches festive spirit to surge over 5,900

SHARES WERE in celebratory mood again, with Footsie scorg a 65.5-point gain to top 5,900 fr the first time since July. Hopes of another interest-rate cut in the new year and continuing New York ebullience helped sentiment.

The festive upsurge has taken the index into areas which seemed out of bounds only a few weeks ago. In the past seven trading sessions it has surged 374.4 points, hringing into sight the 6.000 Footsie forecasts common at the start

progress has been achieved ters are away, preparing for their seasonal festivities. There is often a temptation for those left minding the shop to take what they see as precautionary actions which - in the thin trading conditions prevailing have an exaggerated impact on prices.

Footsie is not far from the

CELEBRATED, running the Chili's restaurants, could be in profit this year, says broker Beeson Gregory. The company reported a

half-year £666,000 loss, but analyst Ian Berry sees profits of £200,000 for the year to March. The Chili's chain is being extended to five and the Starvin Marvin restaurants turned round. The shares are 6.75p against 21p two years ago.

6,179 peak hit in July Such a display would have appeared laughable when wild rumours of a banking crisis and other bearisb influences pressed the market to a year's low of 4,599.2 in October.

For once the rest of the market joined in the romp of the Footsie overlords. The mid cap index rose 34.7 points to 4,798, albeit still a long way off its 5,966.5 peak in June. And the small cap index rose 12.8 to 2,044.4 against its 2,792.7 high.

Tips for the new year - real and rumoured - played a part
- The market advance, although suspicions that more big bids would arrive early in 1999 also helped sentiment.

Rentokil Initial, the environment group thought to be itching to make a corporate strike, rose 15.75p to 458.75p, a peak. It is known to have looked at Compass, but the strength of the contract caterer's shares. firm at 679.5p providing a capitalisation of £4.7bn, could make it too big to swallow.

British Petroleum flared 23.5p to 902p. The Amoco merger has still to be cleared, but an

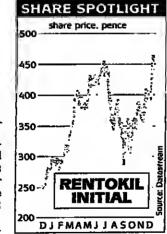


PAIN

REPORT

announcement is expected whind you, much of the shortly. Many tracker funds have presumably increased numps m anuci Footsie's higgest constituent. But others have, for various reasons, been forced to delay their huying: once the deal goes through they are expected to chase BP.

Marks & Spencer made further headway, up 9.25p to 417.75p. But retail expert Richard Ratner, at a small stockbroking firm, Seymour Pierce Butterfield, moved profit forecasts to a new low - he is shooting for only £760m, cutting by £40m. He said Marks last



week experienced poor trading, exacerbating supply problems. The chain's stockpile was growing and many goods will have to be sold at knock-down prices in the new year.

This week SG Securities cut its Marks estimate from £860m to £805m, and Teather & Greenwood went from £860m to £785m. Last week Henderson Crosthwaite moved from £850m

Shares of little retailer Cadoro go from bad to worse. The chain, which has admitted trading problems, fell 0.25p to just 0.5p. The shares were 7.5p early this year.

General Electric Co's latest European joint ventures lifted the shares 6p to 543.5p as the cat-and-mouse defence companies alliance game became even more confusing.

There was a spate of hid activity among second liners, with some deals emerging through the rumours. BCH, a vehicle management group, accelerated 28.5p to 246p as Deutsche Bank mounted a 250p cash offer; house builder Banner Homes put on 22p to 140p when a management buyout at 143.5p appeared; and Vision, a digital camera chip maker, added 13p to 58.5p on the STMicroelectronics offer. Car dealer Evans Halshaw rose 5p to 261p following the Pendragon offer.

Goldsmiths, the jeweller, sparkled 52p to 164p after what it described as a "very prelimpation of BP's emergence as Bros smartened 16.5p to 150p on rumours of an Arcadia

Marston Thompson & Evershed, the brewer, fell 8p to 287.5p once it became clear that Greene King, the East Anglian hrewer, would not take on the white knight role. Greene King has agreed with hostile

LAST WEEK'S unsolicited and rejected bid for Avon Rubber - flat at 555p - may have led a major group to take a look at the maker of parts largely for the

automotive industry. The shares have bounced back from their low of 394p. but the group's impressive record, with profits hitting £26.4m last year, is likely to be deflated: profits of about £24m are expected.

bidder Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries to huy 170 Marston pubs for £80m if its offer goes through. Marston has bitterly resisted Wolves' £262m offer, but it now looks as though it may have to capitulate if Wolves can find the cash to top un its offer.

IT recruitment group MSB International continued its remarkable run following an upbeat trading statement, gaining 32.5p to 282.5p. ISA International jumped 8p to 42p as director David Heap took his stake to 22.1 per cent, and John Foster, giving up textiles to concentrate on property, fell 3.25p

to 6.75p. Tepnel Life Sciences softened 1.5p to 13.5p following the surprise departure of chief

executive Simon Douglas. Derby, a building materials group, fell 10p to 33.5p on a profits warning, and William Nash's failure to hang on to a key German contract left the shares 12.5p off at 142.5p.

SEAQ VOLUME: 477 million SEAQ TRADES: 43,077 GILTS INDEX: 115.5 +0.55

The Thomas Cook chain is set to become part of Europe's largest holiday group

Preussag books into G

THOMAS COOK last night looked set to become part of Europe's largest holiday group after the German conglomerate Preussag announced plans to huy a majority stake in the UK travel company.

The deal will lead to the formation of a tourism giant with turnover of over £4.6bn a year and more than 1,400 sbops serving almost 10 million package travellers a year.

The Hanover-based giant yesterday put an end to months of speculation and announced

By Francesco Guerrera

cent holding in Thomas Cook from its German owner, Westdeutsche Landesbank. Preussag, which shed its

steelmaking business and has transformed itself into an industrial and tourism group, said it would increase its stake to 50.1 per cent by September if the deal received regulatory approval

Financial details of the acquisition were not disclosed as Thomas Cook, the owner of Preussag's interest would not that it had bought a 24.9 per the Sunworld and Flying scupper the Carlson deal.

Colours tour operators, is not listed on the stock market. However, City analysts said Preussag could have paid up to £280m for the initial stake and was expected to shell out a sim-

UK company. The deal comes two months after Thomas Cook's decision to merge its worldwide husiness with the UK activities of

the US leisure group Carlson. Sources close to the company yesterday said that

They added that at the end of the complex weh of transactions, Thomas Cook will be majority-owned by Preussag, with Carlson and WestLB sharing the remaining 49.9 per ilar amount to win control of the cent.

The German bank will retain significant influence through its minority holding in the new group and its 33 per cent stake in Preussag.

The new-look Thomas Cook will be headed by John Donaldson, an insider who is due to hecome chief executive of the UK company in January.

foreign investment. **Daiwa rating cut** DATWA BANK has had its

credit rating cut to junk bond status by the credit agency, Standard & Poor's. Six other major Japanese banks. including Sumitomo Bank. also had their ratings cut. Standard & Poor's said most of the banks were facing mounting bad debts and "substantial" net losses.

Electra funding

THE PRIVATE equity group, Electra Fleming, said yesterday it provided the funding for the buyout of Safety-Kleen Europe from its US parent Safety-Kleen Corporation. Safety-Kleen supplies parts cleaning and spray-gun cleaning for the automotive and industrial markets in Europe and provides waste collection services.

Pepper Laporte warns of sales pockets £5m from **BCH** bid

BCH VEHICLE Management bought out by its management three years ago and floated 12 months ago, has accepted a £40m bid from Deutsche Bank subsidiary ALD AutoLeasing, writes Clifford German.

Richard Pepper, the chief executive who led the buyout, will receive £5m in cash for his 12.61 per cent stake plus an undisclosed sum for his share Shareholders

include NatWest Bank, HSBC, Robert Fleming and BAT, all of which backed the 1995 buyout. The bid is worth 250p a

share, 47.5 per cent above the 169.5p close on 25 November when BCH revealed it had received an approach. It values the company at £39.6m com-pared with £31.6m when it floated at 200p a year ago. Shareholders will receive a further interim dividend of 5p.

The Bristol group includes AutoChoice, a personal contract purchase scheme, and conventional contract hire, leasing and fleet management services. It operates 16,000 vehicles on behalf of 700 companies.

The bid price is about 15 times forecast earnings of 16.5p in the year ending next week. Senior executive directors will stay with the company, to be renamed DB Vehicle Solutions.

slowdown in chemicals

LAPORTE, the chemicals group undergoing a major overhaul, yesterday revealed slowing sales and warned that its major markets had deteriorated. In a trading statement the

company, which is selling noncore businesses to focus on specialty chemicals, said market conditions were "more challenging than six months ago". The slowdown was particu-

larly harsh in the electronics division, which makes chemicals for computer microchips. Jim Leng, chief executive, said the business had had a a

very tough time as the semiconductor industry suffered its biggest downturn in 30 years. Second-half profits in the divi-

By Francesco Guerrera sion, which accounts for 10 per

cent of group sales, would experience a "material reducbon", the statement said. However, Mr Leng expects Laporte to meet analysts'

expectations of annual profits of £130m, thanks to a good showing by specialty chemicals. Sales in the division, boosted by August's £600m purchase of Inspec, were helped by strong demand from the drugs sector.

The company announced the sale of its hygiene division to ita management for £31m. The money will be used to reduce Laporte's debt mountain. which stands at around £500m after the Inspec acquisition. Mr Leng said the company was not under buge pressure to bring down its borrowings as interest cover stood at a comfortable 4.5 times.

He said the sale was consistent with his strategy of exiting non-core husiness. The division would bave needed further investment as the European market for hygiene products was very competitive and very fragmented.

"You can't stay in non-core businesses where you have to keep acquiring to fill geographical and product gaps," he said.

Laporte shares rose 0.5p to 464p yesterday.

Goldsmiths soars on bid talk

SHARES IN Goldsmiths, the jewellery chain, shot up from 112p to 164p yesterday, after the group confirmed it had received a "very preliminary approach"

which could lead to a bid. Analysts suggested a trade sale to a large store chain or bid from rival jeweller Signet, but no hot favourite emerged. Goldsmiths has resisted the gloom that has overtaken most high street retail chains from Marks & Spencer down.

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

running 10 per cent ahead of 1997 levels and Jurek Piasecki. the chairman and chief executive, has continued to predict sales increases in the run-up to the crucial Christmas period. Analysts have only slightly

trimmed their profit forecasts while still projecting a modest overall increase. But the shares have been badly affected by the market shake-out. Earlier this Earlier this year sales were year the shares were trading at

280p and even after yesterday's rebound the market capitalisation is still under £39m. Five leading shareholders, in-

cluding M&G Investment Management, control 23 per cent of the shares and the directors a further 13 per cent. Last year the chairman and chief executive set out an ambitious target of doubling the size of the business by expanding the distribution and office facilities and embarking on a programme to open 15 new outlets a year.

Shareholders last year also approved an ambitious incentive scheme for the directors, which required them to increase earnings per share by 100 per cent over five years if they are to receive any benefit and by 150 per cent to derive the maximum

The base for the calculation is 15.3p a share in 1996. Earnings rose to 19.1p in the year to 31 January 1998 and analysts still expect 21.5p in the current year rising to 25.3p next year.

COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	X-(
Chancer Holdings (1) Constant Commercial (1) John Foeler & Ca. (1) Interpret M Asset High (1) " High Market High (1) " High Market Might (1)	- (-) 0.955m (-) 2.97m (4.48m) - (-) 72.338m (67.472m) - (-)	-0 467m (4.813m) 0.413m (-) -0.566m (0.017m) -0.040m (-) 3.170m (2.976m) 0.245m (0.233m)	-2.1p (15.2p) 7.4p (-) -5.0p (0.3p) -1.52p (-) 64.8p (54.9p) 10.90p (10.38p)	1.0p (1.55p) - (-) - (-) - (-) 21p(20p) - (-)	- - - -	:

(F) - Final (I) - Interior

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A THE SET OF SERVICE

SPORT

Football's Christmas spirit was all humbug

WELL, IT'S that time of the year again, chestnuts roasting on an open fire, holly and jingle bells,

Yo, ho, ho, and all that jazz. A time to remember, which someone on radio was up to the other night, recalling when League football was played on Christmas Day in a jovial atmosphere of back-slapping goodwill to all men.

He had to be kidding. What some of us call to mind. everyone who was then employed in the game, is 11am kick-offs on Christmas morning: long, jolting journeys on steam trains to fulfil return fixtures the next day; the cheerless waiting rooms of deserted railway outposts, feuds



carried over, nursing injuries in heatless carriages, dry curledup sandwiches washed down with a bottle of ale.

Because witless administration had yet to see the sense

ered hundreds of miles to play each other twice in 24 hours. Often, the results were ridiculous too. Frequently, home defeats were turned around on

chaotic Christmas arrangements but the results of premature festive celebration. A personal favourite concerns a normally abstemious winger whose equilibrium on Christmas morning was sorely disturbed by a fall from the straight and narrow. Able to conceal this from stern management hut fearful of disgracing himself on the

When his centre in the final minute led to an own goal that won the match, still finding it difficult to distinguish clearly hetween friend and foe, he proffered a congratulatory Old players speak not only of hand to the culprit. A punch, unseen by the referee, left him

flattened in the back of the net. Cautions, nevermind sendings-off, were rare in those days but cursing in the earshot of some referees on Christmas Day could bring down retribution. My father discovered this in a match controlled by Stanley Rous, the schoolAssociation and later president of the game's governing body, Fifa. In Rous's view my father's exclamation of "Jesus Christ" on a holy day justified a booking for blasphemy.

Probably because Christmas is associated with snow it usually brings me around to thinkwas 10 years old. ing about Sulky Gowers. Sulky. who ran a small night-club in the West End of London to which footballers were drawn in the long ago, hated snow. He loathed it almost as much as racecourse stewards and people who tried to put the arm on him. Snow made it difficult to

for his button-hole. When it snowed and the damn stuff settled, nothing much happened in sport, which was a problem for Sulky, who claimed that denials of his gambling instinct brought on a headache. Sulky hadn't suffered a headache since he

Sulky was exceedingly fond of footballers. He was fond of winning jockeys too, hut footballers were his favourites.

In the days when greyhounds ran around Stamford Bridge there was a cafe across from the main entrance where Sulky held court before the

one Christmas he was taking tea there when a prominent London footballer crossed the threshold. "How did you get on?" Sulky

asked, warming his hands around a large cup, and with a wary eye on the weather because be smelt snow. "Lost 4-1," the footballer growled. "Listen." Sulky said. "I want you to give up the game. Take a six months course in etiquette and be my butler."

One New Year's Eve Sulky was in a London pub with a group that included the former Arsenal inside-forward Jimmy Logie, who was criminally

in playing derby matches over field, he begged not to be given becoming an autocratic remain upright on B gammy leg commencement of racing. On passed over by Scotland for all christmas, many teams cover the ball. Secretary of the Football and put up the cost of carnations the Saturday evening before hut one international match. Sulky was standing on a table singing one of his favourite refrains when a man he had conned in the guise of a solicitor, entered the premises. "Sulky, Sulky, give it a rest," one of his friends said, "look who's here." "So what?" Sulky

replied. "Can't a solicitor sing?" Like Sulky, the sound of supporters tramping to matches on Christmas morning has long gone. Doubtless, the majority now are astonished to hear of it happening. As for today's pampered heroes, the worst they can expect is the rotten inconvenience of a training session.

Plenty of faith left in Saint Matthew

Le Tissier has been through thick and thin at The Dell and he has no intention of giving it all up now. By Nick Harris

MATT LE TISSIER will never forget 12 February 1997. There were five than this. And we're not a worse minutes to go to half-time at Wembley, and England were 1-0 down to a Gianfranco Zola goal in a crucial France 98 qualifier. David Betty floated a deep cross into the box and the Italian goalkeeper drifted to leave an open net. Le Tissier rose leapt to his feet in the Royal Box, a football pitch, I'm arrogant, in Saint had paid off. The header flew that's as far as it goes. I'd hate to narrowly wide and Le Tissier's Eng- think that when I come off the footland career was effectively over.

Fast forward to the canteen at gant person, because that's not me." Southampton's Marchwood training ground on a wet winter Tuesday. Mark Hughes is eating a jacket potato at the next Formica table. while Le Tissier is reflecting on a start to this domestic season that saw seven defeats and a draw in Southampton's first eight games, and despite a brief rally, his team firmly rooted at the hottom of the

"There were a lot of changes very quickly [this summer] and it took a while for people to settle in," Le Tissier said. "But we didn't expect it to be that bad." It had, be added, taken some time to adjust to changes including the departure of Kevin Davies and the arrival of Hughes, Stuart Ripley and David Howells. "It was a very dodgy start and we've given ourselves a lot of

work to do. But we're up for it." When talking about the route to survival, which starts on Saturday at The Dell against Chelsea - unheaten in 17 matches and with more than a touch of the Italian about them, including Zola - Le Tissier's voice has a levity that is not so much nonchalance as enlightened calm.

"We've been in a lot worse situations team than we were last season."

As the scorer of more than 200 goals (many of them crucial in relegation scraps) in nearly 500 appearances for the Saints, he is probably entitled to be a touch blasé.

"I'm a show-off," he said. "I just to meet the ball and Glenn Hoddle want to be the centre of attention. On close to rapture that his faith in the that I've got a belief in my ability, but hall pitch I come across as an arro-

> Southampton fans, no doubt, appreciate the fact that Le Tissier has never felt the need to leave, but even they, at times, have been baffled by his loyalty. A few years ago a supporters' group even made a record. "Legend of B Saint", and pleaded through megaphones before a match for their hero to go to whichever club it was necessary to secure his England place. "It's nice that people want the best for me." Le Tissier said but added he had simply never wanted to go, and that ultimately, it was not loyalty, per se, that had kept him at The Dell, hut selfishness

> "I didn't have an ambition to play for Liverpool or Manchester United." he said, explaining why he believes his higher motives have been equally well served on the south coast. "I had an ambition to play for England and you don't get any higher than that. Where's the lack of ambition there?

Le Tissier has always said that should Southampton be relegated. he would seek to leave the club. Only this week he said again it would be "very difficult" for him to play in the a fast buck and they [critics] think I'm



Matthew Le Tissier has a lot on his shoulders at the Marchwood training ground, as be goes about belping to keep Sonthampton affoat this season

said he believed that Saints will avoid the drop. "I would put money on us staving up."

Le Tissier sees no grounds for belief that his chosen course has been misguided. The argument that playing for a big club would have served his ambition better cuts no ice with him. Even an offer from Saturday's opponents, reportedly for £2m-£10m when Hoddle was the manager, did not sway him. "I love the [Southampton] area. I love the club. The fans have been brilliant to me. I see no reason to move on. I'm happy with my life." he said. "People don't understand me as a person and what I want out of my life. I'm not init just to make

First Division. But then he also strange because they can't work me out. And I think that annoys people." Surely, though, having not been

picked for this summer's World Cun, even after scoring an England B hat-trick against an admittedly weak Russian B side, there were regrets that things could have been different? "I was a bit disappointed not to get in the squad of 30 he [Hoddle] announced." Le Tissier said. "But I've never given up hope." He smiled, before adding. "T've only just turned 30. I think I'm capable of it. I just know that it's not going to take a few good games, its going to take a hell of a lot. But I'll never give up hope until somebody tells me they're

the man Saints fans call "Le God" ever return to his best, the kind of form he produced for a season and a half under the tenure of Alan Ball, of all people, from January 1994 to May 1995 and that has not been

consistently seen since? "I played my best football under Bally without a shadow of a doubt because of the belief he had in me. He believed I was a good player. He popped me in the middle of the park and he said: 'Son. you go and do your own thing.' And he said to the other 10 players: Whenever you get the ball, as often as you can, give it to him.' And that made me feel like the hest player in the whole world." In 60 League games under Ball, Le Tissier scored 34 times and in five

1994 and helped them to 10th place a whole different game." the following year.

Will that ever happen again? "The manager [Dave Jones] is starting to believe in me a little bit more than he did last season," said Le Tissier, adding that last season's 12th position could have been better. "I think we took the foot off the pedal a hit because we knew we were safe. You never know, we might get in that position again."

The only time Le Tissier answers a question hurriedly is when asked if there is anything in his career he would like to have done differently. "One thing," came the bley, are of instant response. "The header I Matthew.

cup matches he scored another 10. had against Italy would go just the His efforts kept Southampton up in other side of the post. And then it's A local taxi driver has the last

word, oft repeated about Le Tissier.

"He doesn't run around a lot hut he

can still turn a game," said the cabhie. "And he's one of the nicest hlokes you could ever meet. "I picked him up once in Bedford Place (300 yards from The Dell), an he asked to go to The Dell.

"I said 'You're 'avin a laugh aren't you?' and he said 'It's a long way round that corner"."

Short distances, whether the length of a walk to The Dell or the margin of that missed goal at Wembley, are obviously the bane of Saint

Answers 50 sporting quiz of the year from page 19

WHERE IN THE WORLD (Clockwise, from top left) Royal Birkdale, where 17-year-old

2 Silverstone, where Damon Hill spun out of the British Grand Prix 3 Wembley, where England played Saudi Arabia in a World Cup warm-up match

4 Atlantic City, where Lennox Lewis knocked out Shannon Briggs in March to retain his WBC heavyweight title 5 The Bislett Stadium In Oslo, where Britain's Mark Richardson Inflicted a rare defeat on Michael Johnson

6 Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica, where England's Alec Stewart was among those who suffered because of the dangerous pitch, which led to the abandon-ment of the first Test against the West

7 (centre) Stade Roland Garros, where Martina Hingis and Jana Novotna won the women's doubles title

TROUBLED TIMES

1 Adam Hollioake, who was describing the weather in Bangladesh during the Eng-land cricket team's defeat by South Africa

in the Wills International Cup 2 France's Zinedine Zidane, who was sent off against Saudi Arabia in the Stade de France but went on to score two goals

3 Faustino Asprilla after being substituted during Colombia's first World Cup game against Romania

Old Firm match in January 5 Paul Ince, sent off in Sweden after two

RECORD BREAKERS 1 Graeme Hick, who became the 24th

ricketer to score 100 first-class centuries. He achieved the mark in his 574th imings, making him the third fastest centurion behind Don Bradman (295] and Denis

2 Mark Ramprakash, who hit his first Test century (after 38 Innings) in the fifth Test against West Indies in Barbados 3 Notts County, who secured a place in the Second Division on 29 March, the ear-

liest a club has achieved promotion in the Football League's 110-year history 4 Pat Symcox, who scored the first Test en he hit 108 for South Africa against Pakistan in Johannesburg

5 Angus Fraser, who took his first 10-wicket haul in a Test match against the West Indies In Port of Spain in February

THE WEMBLEY WAY 1 France beat Wales 51-0 at Wembley in rugby union's Five Nations' Champi-

2 Arsenal, whose only goal in their FA Cup semi-final against Wolves was scored by the Liberian striker Christopher Wreh 3 Rugby league's Challenge Cup final, in which John Kear's Sherfield side upset the odds by bearing Wigan

4 Marcelo Salas scored twice at Wemb-

ley in February to give Chile a 2-0 victory over England, whose team included heir youngest player this century. Michael

Chelsea in their Coca-Cola Cup triumph over Middlesbrough, He also scored Chelsea's opening goal in last year's FA Cup final

5 Roberto Di Matteo, who scored for

WINNERS AND LOSERS I Lancashire, who won two of cricket's Trophy and the Axa League, on succes-

2 Gianfranco Zola's goal gave Chelsea victory over VfB Stuttgart in the European Cup-Winners' Cup final. Cheisea had last won the trophy in Athens in 1971

3 Cambridge, who took advantage of ad-Vantageous weather conditions to win the 144th Boat Race in record time 4 Lee Westwood, who won the Freeport-

McDermott Classic at English Turn, New Orleans, in only his eighth golf tournament in America 5 Port Vale's Allen Tankard missed the final penalty in an FA Cup third round

shoot-out against Arsena

GROUNOS FOR DEBATE

1 Richmond Rugby Club, who left the Athletic Ground to share with Reading Foot-

2 Halifax, who left Thrum Hall in March and moved into The Shay, home of the Conference winners Hallfax Town

SPORTING QUIZ ANSWERS 3 France, who used to play their major matches at the Parc des Princes in Paris. played their first match at the Stade de France in 5t Denis, venue of the World

So what of the future then? Will

never going to pick me."

Cup final, in January

4 Everton fans celebrated Chelsea's 2-0 win over Bolton on the last day of the season, which guaranteed their club's Premiership survival

5 Crystal Palace, who recorded their first

FAME FOR 15 MINUTES The London Scottish rugby union play-er had his ear bitten during a game against Bath in January

2 The 16-year-old Australian became the youngest tennis player to win an ATP event, the Australian men's hardcourt championship in February

3 The Stevenage Borough forward scored the equaliser to earn an FA Cup third round replay against Newcastle United 4 Olsson was the leader of Britain's fourman bobsleigh team, whose bronze was the only British medal success at the Win-

ter Olympics in Nagano 5 Everton made Simonsen the most expensive goalkeeper in English Coottall his-tory when they agreed a £3.3m deal to sign him from Tranmere

END OF THE LINE

Tony Jarrett, the British athlete, who

won the 110m hurdles at the Commonwealth Games 2 The England rugby union team, who

ite 111:01:50

stopped South Africa establishing a world record of 1B consecutive victories by beating them at Twickenham

3 Sunderland's Michael Gray, whose miss gave Charlton a 7-6 victory in the penalty shoot-out at the First Division

4 Lilian Thuram, who scored both of France's goals in their 2-1 victory over Croatla in the World Cup semi-finals 5 Jack Nicklaus, who missed a major championship for the first time since 1961 when he pulled out of the Open at Roy-

6 Cal Ripken, who in September was left out of the Baltimore Orioles baseball team at his own request 7 Natasha Zvereva, who beat Steffi Graf

S Heart of Midlothian, who ended years of disappointment for their fans by beating Rangers In the Scottish Cup final 9 Michael Atherton, whose run of consecutive Test appearances ended when he withdrew from the game against Sri Lanka 10 Rangers, whose attempt to win the Scottish Championship for the 10th sea-

son in succession ended when Celtic beat

St Johnstone 2-0 with goals by Henrik

GOLDEN OLDIES

Larsson and Harald Brattback

1 Petr Korda, who won his first Grand Slam tennis title at the Australian Open 2 Jon Callard, whose late penalty earned Bath a 19-18 victory over Brive in rug-3 Michael Lynagh, whose six successful France

kicks helped Saracens beat Wasps in rug-4 John Elway, the Denver Broncos quar-terback, led his team to a 31-24 Super Bowl victory over the Green Bay Pack-ers. He had been on the losing side in his three previous Super Bowl appearances 5 Mark O'Meara, who won his first major golf title with his triumph at the U5 Masters at Augusta in April

1 Hickie's try for Ireland against France was the first scored by Ireland in Paris Catherina McKiernan, who provided

THE GLOBAL GAME

reland's first victory in the London Marathon 3 The European golf tour

4 Doug Walker, Doug Turner and Julian Golding, who took the first three places in the men's 200 metres final at the European athletics championships 5 The first Test between West Indies and

England in Jamaica was abandoned after 56 minutes because of a dangerous pitch with England on 17 for 3 6 Olivier Pesiler, riding High-Rise, held off John Reld, on City Honours, to become the first French jockey to win the Derby at Epsom since 1963

7 John Higgins won the world snooker championship by beating Ken Doherty 8 Crystal Palace's home game against Sheffield United was televised live in China following the signing of two Chinese internationals by Crystal Palace 9 Marco Pantani, winner of the Your de

10 Brian Watts, who was beaten by Mark O'Meara in a play-off for the Open at Roy-al Birkdale. Warts earned success in Japan after failing to secure his US Tour card

WHO SAID IT? Tony Adams, the Arsenal captain.

after his team's Premiership triumph 2 Dwight Yorke on his transfer from Aston Villa to Manchester United 3 Martin O'Neill, Leicester City manager, after 5hearer's controversial challenge

on Nell Lennon In April 4 Glenn Hoddle on David Beckharn after his free-kick had helped England beat Colombia 2-0 and qualify for the second

round of the World Cup 5 Glenn Hoddle explaining the omission of Paul Gascoigne from England's World

Cup squad 6 Glenn Hoddle on David Beckham after the Manchester United player's sending-

off against Argentina in the World Cup 7 Mika Hakkinen on pre-race nerves before his Formula One championship-winning triumph in the Japanese Grand Prix 8 Carl Llewellyn, rider of the Grand National winner, Earth Summit 9 Mark Taylor, Australia's cricket captain.

on reaction to his decision to declare against Pakistan while he was on 334 not out. It was his career-best total and equalled that of 5ir Donald Bradman 10 France's Laurent Blanc on being denied a place in the World Cup final when he was sent off after Croatia's Slaven Bil- κ had fallen theatrically in the semi-finals

King George VI Chase: The history of Boxing Day's showpiece suggests that last year's winner will triumph again

Tradition means Business as usual

desert their presents on Boxing Day morning and go to Kempton Park will receive a cracker. All the spectators who attend the King George VI Chase card at Sunbury this Saturday will expect an athletic version in the afternoon. The portents suggest they will not he disap-

History shows us that the King George fully deserves its reputation as the most prestigious conditions chase apart from the Cheltenham Gold Cup. In one sense though it is dramatically different from the Blue Riband.

When a horse wins Cheltenham's championship the chances of it doing so again seem to be minimal. Ooce a King George has been collected, however, you have to try monstrously hard to prevent another attaching itself to you. If See More Business, the victor 12 months ago, wins on Saturday, he will become the fourth dual winner of the contest in the last 10 years.

"See More", as they call him in his Somerset stable, is a hasty piece of work when he first comes in from a summer at grass. "He's not so bad once he's fit, but to start with when he comes back he's a real Jack the Lad," Paul Nicholls, the eight-year-old's trainer, said yesterday. "You have to be very careful and when you clip him he could literally kill you. His jumping. The occasional lapsmood can change very quickly because he's got the aggressive streak which helps makes him such a good racehorse."

They have attempted to replicate See More Business' winning preparation at Ditcheat this season and the challenge looks remarkably similar both in terms of figures in the hreaks going in the race last frm book and the horse's fig-ure itself. "He's exactly the same as he was last year," Nicholls added. "He did a nice plece of work this morning and

his weight is just right. "I watched the King George it afterwards you could say that the race did not turn out as strong as it looked going into it. On paper, it looks as though it could be even hotter this year. with the likes of Teeton Mill and

1.10 EXECUTIVE King (nap)

Stations) ADMISSIONE USA PARK: Members 52; rest free. FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS

12.40 Lawahik

 $v_{\rm i} \propto v_{\rm i}^{\rm out}$

 $\tau_{i}:\mathbb{T}^{\{a\}}$

. . . .

1.45 Decoupage

THE FIRST 500 children to BY RICHARD EDMONDSON

takes a lot of winning

take," Nicholls said. -He's clever more than anything else and he has to be because he's not a hig, scopey horse and will never he an extravagant jumper

RICHARD EDMONDSON Nap: See More Business (Kempton 2.20) NB: Lord Of The River

suits him because he's such a

tough and very game, a horse I admire a lot, but if he is put under pressure, his jumping lets him down slightly," Lorcan Wyer, Simply Dashing's jockey. says. "I think he got all the

for some time now, largely because of defective bellows, but now all appears to be right. "Simply Dashing came out of last night and when you look at his latest race pretty good and ate up well and his training has gone really well since," the Irishman sald. "We are very hopeful he will run a hig race.

Imperial Call in there, and it's obvious that any King George

The favourite will be partnered by young Joe Tizzard, formerly a hig name in the West country point-to-point division hut a 19-year old rather less trumpeted in the professional ranks. Tizzard does have ability, though, and at 6ft tall he can very nearly tie his legs under See More Business's belly and negate his mount's leaping de-

(Kempton 1.10) "We've had to live with his jumping and mistakes from day one, but he does seem to

Nevertheless, if there is a part of See More Business's armoury that was not plunged into the Styx at birth, it is his es are a lifebelt for those in op-

year and whether that will happen again is open to question."

"Some people have said that

it doesn't have the look of a vin-

2.SS Soloman

3.25 Melody Mald

2.20 Imperial Call (nh)

KEMPTON - BOXING DAY

HYPERION

GOING: Good to Soft (Good in places).

III Right-hand course, Practically flat, Run-in of 200yd.

III Course is on A308 at Sunbury. (Bus link from Richmond & Hatton Cross Underground stations) ADMISSION: Club £27, Tattersalls £16; Silver Rung £7. Under-16s free. CAR

FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS

ILEADING TRAINERS: ID Nicholson 19 wins from 97 rumers (284%), R Ainer 15-43

Sub. N Henderson 12-88 (175%), N Twiston-Davies 10-52 (192%)

INCADING JOCKEYS: J Osborne 22 wins from 73 rides (301%), M A Fitzgerald 21-115
(183%), A Maguire 20-78 (256%), R Durwoody 19-95 (20%).

IF FAVOURITIES: 122 wins from 259 races (success rate 42.2%)

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: None.

12.40 PERTEMPS MANAGED SERVICES NOVICE HURDLE (B) \$10,000 2m Penalty Value \$7,133

- 10 dectared BETTING: 9-4 Grecian Dart, 3-1 Lawahit, 5-1 Jungil, 6-1 Follow The Leader, 7-1 Alhoseam, 12-1
Magic Circle, 20-1 Moondarge, Running Water, 33-1 others
1997 Enviance 4 11 0 Mr T Doumen 9-1 (F Doumen, F) 7 ran

FORM GUIDE

FORM GUIDE

Althoesam: Odds-on win in maiden hale at Fontwell (soft) on seasonal debut franked by Copper Com (3rd) (and should again beer Yeomen Ofttre Guard who was fifth. Was more impressive need time on good ground at Taunton.

Greaten Dark: Beeten at Ascot and Chelenham before a cosy 8-length win from My Lies Too in lower grade at Windsor (good to soft). Probably improving Laweihik: Very pleasing hunding debut at Haydock (soft) where he led at the last before winning by 3 lengths from Subtle Influence. Well-regarded Pollow The Leader: Consistent since winning maiden hale at Gowran in September, besten narrowly in good Leopardstown handicap last time. Imperial Call's stablemate Junglit Botted up at odds-on at Uttowster (soft) on Saturday to further frank the form of his previous thriat in Hidebound at Newbury (good to soft).

Maglic Circle: Navan bumper winner in 1997 and later bought for 50,000gris at Doncaster, Probable second string behind Grecan Dart.

Moondargs: New Zealand-bred son of Touching Wood. Interesting newcomer Bunning Water: Won Huntingdon NH Flat race last season before a good second to Lord Or The Flest under his penalty at Doncaster. Down the field in Champion Bumper at Chetterham Festival but was eased when chance had gone. One to keep an eye on Yeoman Offline Guard: Promising fifth to Athossam on Fontwell debut but held on that Zurs: Appeared not quite to get the big when seventh to Shahrur at Windsor, but on that sharp track could go well if going not too testing.

THE SHAPP TRUNGLI may not have beaten much when landing the odds at Littoseter on Saurday, but could not have been more impressive and lent further credence to his Newbury form when third to Hidebound. Hidebound's stablemate Grecian Dart bound an easy opportunity at Windsor and with his stable in form should not be discounted, but the danger in a tescinating opener is likely to be Larwahlik. He was well-fancied to make a winning hunding debut at Haydock and justified the confidence with a smooth 3-length victory. Althosasm is more highly tried after victories at Fontwell and Taurdon.

BETTING: 9-4 Spendid, 7-2 Mister Moroes, 5-1 Executive King, 7-1 Intee, Song Of The Sword, 8-1 Lord Of The River, 18-1 King Of Sparts, 25-1 Wild Dee

1965-70ding The Facts 8 11 2 M A Fazgeraid 5-2 (N Henderson) 0 ran

yellow: brown sleeves, yellow armiess
MOONEDARGA (NZ) (F350) (Sir Eric Parker) Mrs A Perrett 5 11 5.......................... O Bradley

LONO DISTANCE TRAVELLER: Kinnoscash (145) has been sent 235 miles.

ficiencies. The horse flew round last year and didn't make a mis-

get round these hig tracks. Joe good horseman

position. "See More Business is very

Wyer's mount has not won

Emerging champion: See More Business (right) gallops out of the mist this week as he works towards Saturday's King George VI Chase at Kempton tage King George hut I can assure you it's still going to take some winning. Mine will not look out of place and we are

going down with a good chance. "I don't know if it will be soft enough for the Irisb horse [Imperial Call), and Teeton Mill has a little to find on the official ratings, although he could be a Jodami and go from running well in the Hennessy off a low weight

bas stopped improving? All round, it's a fascinating race." It is difficult to assess what

Cup winner, has achieved in victory in Ireland this winter. More certain is the fact that he will make the running. Teeton Mill is the grey attempting to continue the dyn-

asty of Desert Orchid and One

in handicaps, Elizabeth Taylor Imperial Call, the former Gold had better prepare berself for a reworking of an old role.

Escartefigue, one of David Nicholson's two runners, exhibits flasbes of form but you would not want his company in the trenches, especially not if he was behind you. Adrian Maguire Man. He is almost 10 and has deserts him to ride the accidentto the very top. Who is to say he been hiding in point-to-point prone Mulligan. Challenger Du

fields almost all his life. If he Luc, last year's runner-up, is takes this after just two efforts hardly one you could trust to go to pay the paper bill either but he does, at least, have form in the race and that counts on

turkey-remains day. Dessie, the four-time winner. will be there to advertise further that fact and it should pay to back the tradition being upheld at what is a traditional time of the year. Go for SEE MORE BUSINESS (nan 2.20).

FORM GUIDE Challenger Du Lucz Beaten 2 lengths by See More Business in last year's race (would not go past), but on the side since. Disappointing 25 lengths 4th in Murphy's Gold Cup and 13 lengths 7th of 10 to Direct Route at Sandown (2m ch., good) latest starts. Coome Hill: 1998 Hannessy Gold Cup witner, but training proteins since and first with since Feb '97 when beating Samles 2 lengths at Ascot (2m ch soft) in October, Led early but pulked up 4 but in Hennessy at Newbury last month and difficult to fancy Escartefigues Leading home-trained staying nevice last season; finishing 2m of an Sun Alliance Chasa. Promising 5 lengths 2md to Sury Bay at Haydock last month, but below-form last of 3 to See More Business at Chepslow (2m hoap ch, good) latest. Sometimes lends less than hearth whitely and has sometimes find at the top level.

form last of 3 to See More Business at Chepstow (7m hoap ch, good) latest. Sometimes looks less than hearty battler and has sometiming to find at this top level Imperial Calit: 1996 Gold Cup wriner, back to his best this season with writs at Limerick, Nans and Punchestown, beating Dorans Pride 11/heights last time (2m41 ch, heavy). Front-numer and often spectacular jumper who will want plenty of beating Multigrant Handicapped by erratic jumping since fine novice career and back to hurding last backend. Promising 36 lengths 8th of 13 to Northern Starlight in Tripleprint Gold Cup (eased after faced 3 out), but unproven over this trip and difficult to assess See More Business: Last years 2-length winner from Challenger Du Lize. Later canned out in Gold Cup but back to form at Chepstow latest (7m hoap ch, good), big Don Samoura's a length Males mistakes but a figiter who will be a tough nut to crack again Slimply Doshins; Wind problems since very consisted Ascol win a Autumn 197, but

Samoura' a length. Makes mistakes but a fighter who will be a tough nut to crack again Simply Clashing: Wind problems since very promising Ascol win or Autumn 197, but too-limistring length 2nd to Cyfor Malta in Murphy's Gold Cup (2m44) and staying on 1/4, length numer-up to Northern Staright at Cheltenham (2m5t heap ch, good to soft) leatest. Should be suited by this course and by no means out of it Super Tactics: Goes particularly well here, winning Racing Post Chase last Fabruary from Land Alax Back to best when beating Berfone at Wincarton (2m5t heap ch, good) but disappointing in two starts since and Bayt to struggle in this class Teeton Mills Former top hunter-chase. Well weighted when career-best effort when landing Hennessy Gold Cup (Newbury Sm2t heap ch, good to soft) last month, lead-ing 3 out to beat Eudipe 15 lengths. Still on the upgrade, but plenty to find in this grade.

VERDICT: With Super Tacties likely to eese the burden of pecentalang, IMPERIAL CALL can underline his return to the top flight. He ran a high-class field ragged over 2m4 at Punchestown and his bold jumping could induce errors from See Morre Busi-ness, while running the finish but of Simply Dashing. It would be foolish to underes-timate Teeton Mill, but it is a grant leap from 10st 5to in the Hennessy to the top level.

2.55 NETWORK PERSONNEL NOVICE CHASE (CLASS B) \$10,000 2m Penalty Value £6,710 red, white star, simped steeres, yellow cap 10262/ EAGLES REST (689) (D) (Lady Lloyd Webber) N Henderson 7 ti 0. ... M A Pitagerate

prik and grey diamonds, prik cap
14064 FLYTING EAGLE (F70) (D) (TF Maycock) R Smoson 7 ti 0 A Thornton
rad, white opeules, white sleeves, red seams

-- 6 declared -- BETTING: 1-2 Dinos, 4-1 Dintent Eche, 8-1 Solomen, 10-1 Eagles Rest, 20-1 Flying Eagle 1997 Kadestyof 7 11 6 A Thornton 9-4 (R Dekin) 5 ran FORM GUIDE

Dines: Proved himself among top novices when making all to beat Dawn Leader 11/e lengths at Sandown (2m novice, good). Game and mostly jumps well. The one to beat Distant Echo: Improved to beat Reliander at Chepstow (2m, good to soft) at Chepstow lest month, but unsuited by soft when disappointing 21 lengths 3rd of 6 to Nipper Reed at Uttooster (2m novich) last week. Probably open to improvement Eagles Rest: Bumper winner and smart novice hundler 2 seasons ago. Built for chasranges Heat bumper within and stream nowice intudes 2 seasons ago, built for chast-ing and trom in-form yeard with strong nowice hand. Leading contender deeptie lay-off. Flying Eeglie: Useful 2m handicap hundler last term, built much improved on Flat this year, winning 6 times. Yet to race over tences but yard has form line with Nipper Reed Soloman: Towcester nowice hundle winner last larm, making chasing debut after promis-ing efforts over timber this term. Looks the part and from yerd with good form lines. VERDICT: OINES looked less than the finished article when scoring in a very strong field at Sandown, but he tacks nothing it courage and his expenience could be teling factor. Both Eagles Rest and Soloman promise to make their mark over tences, but

3.25 PERTEMPS CATERING HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS B) £10,000 added 3m 110yds Penelty Value £6,840

Minimum weight: 10st. True honoloop weight: Bo My Mot 8st 12th, Major's Law Bet 13th.
BETTING: 2-7 Papp Kharianna, 5-2 Nelody Mald. 5-1 Be My Mot. 7-1 Subawesi, 6-1 Ivor's Flutter,
18-1 Darzydan, 25-1 Major's Law
1997 Habi Derring 7-10 3 C Llewellyn 6-1 (N Twiston-Davies) 6 ran

FORM GUIDE

Deraydam: Three-time winner last term but looked non-stayer when bin distance into 4th in this last year. 22 lengths 7th of 11 to Brave Tornado at Cheltenham (2m) last time Papo Kharfama: Improving every outing and led before last to bit Toby Brown 11/s lengths with Melody Maid 3 lengths away 3rd at Sandown (2m6) houp hile, good) latest learn. Looked exposed on this mark when 7 lengths 3rd to Buckhouse Boy at Wincamton a year ago Melody Maid: Improved with 3rd to Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham and 4 lengths 3rd rappo Kharsama at Sandown (2m6) lengths 3rd rappo Kharsama at Sandown (2m6) lengths 3rd spot when trailed dif 9th of 11 to Papo Kharsama at Sandown (2m6) houp hide, good) Be My Mot: Had Sulawesi 2 lengths back 3rd when winning over C/D in Nov, but 9th worse off now. Looks exposed after 2nd to Dashing Dollar at Windsor (2m6), good) Major's Later. Winner at Bangor, Santiord and Lecastic last term (latest by 20 lengths from 21th lowert. Fit from AW Flat, but plently to do from 15th out of weights VERDOCT With Depon Chartesters if also to heart for Mesonome the account of weights.

VERDICT: With Page Kharisms likely to head for Wincarton, the way could be open for MELODY MAIO to get back on the winning trail. She appeared to get in front for too soon at Sandown, but looks capable of winning off this mark. A stowly-run race might let Deraydan into the shelve-rup, but the major threat could be twor's Flutter, who runs well here on the Flat and is the sort to go well fresh.

Favourable forecast

THERE ARE 10 race meetings scheduled for Boxing Day and the forecast suggests that none will be troubled by the weather. The card at Wetherby, which features The Grey Monk in the Rowland Meyrick Chase, starts at 12.45, while at Wincanton (1.00 start) Wayward King's attempt to win the Mid Season

Chase for the second successive year provides the highlight. The other meetings, which will appear in Saturday's Independent with form guides, are at Avr (12.55), Hereford (12.25), Huntingdon (1.00), Market Rasen (12.30), Newton Abbot (1.20), Sedgefield (1.00) and Wolverhampton (1.00).

LEOPARDSTOWN - BOXING DAY

2.40 DENNY GDLD MEDAL NOVICE CHASE (Grade 1) £40,000 added 2m 1f Penaity Value £26,000

FORM GUIDE

Milicko's Dream: Followed 20-length wn over Torvill at Thudes (2m2), heavy) with smilar suc-cess over previous winner Wali at Navarr (2m8), heavy). Shorier trip a worry Promatee: Stomped himself leading novice chaser with wins at Lestowel, Naas and Faryhouse (2m4), good to soft), beating Foxchapel King (rec Bib) comfortable 3 lengths on latest start. Good jumper who should not be buffered by drop in trip

Good jumper who chould not be bothered by drop in trip

Amberfeigh House: Has not progressed from win over Lady Daisy at Gowran Park and looks
held by His Song on Punchessown running behind Guttlendge
Bahacc On the upgrade, but falving a big step up in class after, led last, beat Livin Joy 11/tengths at Clorined (2mt) now ch, soft). Plantly to find

Feathered Lauder: Backed to reverse it lengths Nacs defeat on 2th worse terms at Ferryhouse (2mkl, good to soft), but only 4 lengths this after infeaties. Shorter trip apparest him

Finangan's Mollow: Promise in novice chasses last Auturin (12 lengths 3rd to Bavard Jet at

Cork, On soft) but quickly returned to hurdles. Difficult to assess after tay off

Lauturit Improving last and Impressive 20-length winner from Noticomplaningfout at Neas (2m3)

soft) after neck defeat by Promates (gave 7to) over 2m on same course

Native Estatines: Encouraging chase debut when bit 8 lengths by Pince (4 at Novan (2m4) nov

ch, soft). Trip should suit but held by Lanturn through Noticomplaningbut

His Song: hish Champoon Hurdle 2nd last erm and easy winner of first two races over lences.

Out of sorts when bits shell by Guttendge at Punchestown (2m4), nov ch, heavyl latest

VERDICT: With the question mark over His Song after Punchestown, it may pay to side with PROMALEE, who appeared to have something in reserve at Faryhouse and might just have the edge on Lamturn, who could find the trip on the sharp side.

KEMPTON

12.40: The ex-French Flat performer LAWAHIK jumped well debut, suggesting more to come.

LIO: EXECUTIVE KING goes from strength to strength and spreadeagled a solid field at Lingfield last time. While the ground remains on the easy side he can confirm the form with Lord Of The River.

1.45: Tiutchev is likely to be all the rage after his Chellenham win, but this tight track appears more likely to suit the progressive DECOUPAGE, whose Newbury second to Wahiba Sands has received a handsome boost from Lady Rebecca.

2.20: It will be fast and furious upset the highly-regarded His up front here, and that could put Song and Promalee.

HYPERION'S

TV TIPS

See More Business's jumping under pressure, leaving the way clear for IMPERIAL CALL to continue his steady progress back to the top of the tree.

2.55: Josh Gifford, who upset some useful novices at Ascot last week with Kurakka, has a very high regard for SDLD-MAN, who can justify his faith with a winning chasing debut.

LEDPARDSTDWN

2.40: LANTURN simply jumped for fun to win doing handsprings at Naas and could be the one to

FIRST SHOW

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Kempton 2.20 C H L S T See More Bankess 5-2 5-2 5-2 5-2 Tecton 168 114 114 3-1 114 114 traperial Call 41 41 41 92 Simply Desking 11-2 5-1 9-2 5-1 5-1 Escaristique 7-1 15-2 8-1 8-1 8-1 Challenger du Luc 141 12-1 12-1 12-1 18-1 Super lactics 18-1 20-1 20-1 16-1 16-1 Coome Hill 25시 25시 25시 25시 25시 McMagon 33-1 33-1 25-1 33-1 33-1 Each way, a lith the odds, places 1, 2, 3

C Corel, H William Hill, L Lactmoles, S Starriey, T Total

Executive King: Progressive young sort who was well _laced to win at Market Rasen, here and at Newbury before stapped up to Grade 2 a Linglified (3m, sort) where he won by 17 lengths from Lord Of The River (gave 4b) who lost his chance with an error at the second last tence. Rased again in class but r. fine form

VERDICT: SPENDID looks to have a solid chance though whether this sharper track will suit him as well as Wetherby and Chetrorham, where he has won his on date, is one of the ingredients to help make this an intriguing contest between the staying hoveast. Executive King has been the staying the historiand stable this and could again take a tor of beating, white Mister Morose was rumoured been working poorly at home prior to his Chettenham run a fortnight ago. 1.45 PERTEMPS CITY NETWORK HANDICAP HURDLE (B) £10,000 2m Penalty Value £6,853

irbee: Smart pointer who converted well to regulation fences with wins at Worcest and Chepstow. Unsuted by strong pace in Red Marauder's race at Ascot last time

time, but even so ran on garnely to win by half a length from Scotia Nostra Lord Of The River: Mistake and stumbled 2 fences but when a couple or so lengths behind Executive King at Lingfield, Has 4th put and should be suited by timp and going Milater Morroee: Had off-day at Cheltenham last time. Better judged on chasing debut

nham where he beat subsequent scorers Otnes and Desert Mountain

at Chetterfram where he beat subsequent scorers ofnee and Desert Mountain Miki Dee; Northern relater well regarded by his ehrewd trainer, improved a lot on his chas-ing debut, at Market Rasen (form worked out well) to beat Foundry Lane at Wetherby Song Of The Sword: Made numming but made errors and was headed after mistake 3 out before 22 lengths third of 5 to Spendid (gave 21b) at Chettenharm Spendidt Has won at three starts (Wetherby and twice at Chettenharm) since switch-ing to fences this season and disposed of Derrymore Mist in clinical style last time.

ited from Mister Morose's oper performance at Chettenham las

PETTING: 7-4 Tixichev, 8-1 Decoupage, 11-2 Sersina, 7-1 Road Raise, 12-1 Neet Feat, Ronaway Renegade, 14-1 Kinnescash, 16-1 King Of Thieves, 20-1 Classic Eagle, Shahrur, 25-1 Belladur, 40-1 Danegold

40-1 Demegoiti 1997: Serenus 4 10 12 M A Fitzgerald 11-4 (1 tev (N Henderson) 7 ran

FORM GUIDE

Trutchev; Followed most encouraging Newbury reappearance with a very easy visitory over Sir Taibot at Cheltenham
Dimegold: Hea run a couple of stinkers on ground too soft for him ance rattling upearly-season hat-inick. Looks too high in the weights and ground likely to be adverse Serenus: Beaten 2 lengths by Polar Prospect in the William Hill Hurdle at Sandown where Shahrur and Polar Racer were eighth and 10th. Won this test year. Stable in form. Decoupage: Beaten 5 lengths by Walniba Sands at Newbury lest time when Executive Decision was eighth. Previously in front of Kinnescash and Denegold when fourth to Grey Short at Cheltenham. Holds his form and course should suit (Kinnescash: Consistent sort who won by 4 lengths from Catalver at Aintree lest time.)

In carry shot ar chasement recors in some and course around our filters and the course around our filters and the course around our filters and the course around the course are around the course around the course around the course around the course are course around the course are seen as a course are course around the course are seen as a course are around the course are

2.20	PERTEMPS KING GEORGE VI CHASE (Grade 1) (A) £100,000 3m Penaity Value £64,360	C4
40F-40	CHALLENGER DU LUC (FR) (21) (D) (D A Johnson) M Pipe 6 11 10 A F	McCoy B
	royal blue, emersid green sterrest, white cap, emersid green spots COOME HILL (25) (D) (Mrs J Dennis) W Dennis 9 11 10	I Orbonia
/3P-1P	durk blue, white cross-balls, white cap, durk blue star	a Caronise
21-423	ESCARTERGUE (FR) (21) (D) (Darren C Mercer) D Nicholson 8 11 10	R Johnson
0.1911	black, white hoops, black sterves, white spots IMPERIAL CALL (20) (D) (Lessier Farms) R Hurley (II) 9 11 10 M A	Fitzgerald
	royal blue and yellow diabolo, yellow sleaves and cap	-
6143-0	MEJLLIGAN (14) (C) (Lady Herrs) D Nicholson B 11 10	A Maguire
11C-41	SEE MORE BUSINESS (21) (CD) (P Barber & J Keghtey) P Nichola 6 11 10	J Tizzard
deri	l green, white chevron. light green shewes, dark green and white check ca	P
	SBAPLY DASHING (14) (8 Hemmond) T Easterby 7 11 10	L Wydr V
	SUPER TACTICS (35) (CD) (H V Perry) R Alber 10 11 10	Thomson
	green, gold sash and armiats, gold and white hooped cap	
₹ 1·11	TEETON MALL (26) (D) (The Winning Line) Miss V Williams 9 11 10	VallentialOri

- 9 declared BETTING: 5-2 See More Business, 11-4 Teeton Mill, 4-1 Impariet Cell, 5-1 Simply Deshing, 15-2 Escentelique, 14-1 Chellenger Du Luc, 18-1 Super Teetics, 25-1 Coonse Hill, 33-1 Mulligen 1997 See More Business 7 11 10 A Thomson 10-1 (P Micholls) 6 ran

Premiership half-term report. le l

ARSENAL

ARSENE WENGER'S attempts to write off his team before anyone else does would be more convincing if Arsenal had not been 13 points behind Manchester United this time last year and still done the Double.

After a spluttering first half of the season, in which the Champions' League challenge was undermined by injuries and (largely unnecessarily) suspensions, Sunday's performance against Leeds was a reminder of what can be

sn inf

Emmanuel Petit and Patrick Vieira looked a formidable force again at the heart of the team, while Dennis Bergkamp and Marc Overmars seemed at last to have shrugged off the lethar-



gy that has dogged them since the World Cup. Doubts still surround the

reserve strength, and allowing Ian Wright to leave last summer still looks a bad error, Another Champions' League place may depend on keeping a more settled side and greater discipline. Star pupil: Emmanuel Perit. Can do better: Dennis

ASTON VILLA

ASTON VILLA F.C.

VIIIa's championship creden-

tials, it lies in their results so

far against the other maln

contenders. Although they

produced a storming come-

back from 2-0 down to beat

Arsenal, previous matches

against Chelsea, Manchester

United and Liverpool vielded

Star pupil: Gareth Barry. Can do better: Stan Colly-

only one point in total.

BACK ON top of the Premiership following Monday's narrow victory at Charlton, Villa's season has to be seen as a glowing tribute to John Gregory's management skills. Considerable scepticism

followed his appointment as Brian Little's successor last February, but Villa's record under his charge has been outstanding - 27 points from 11 Premiership matches last season, 36 from 18 during the current campaign.

Even the loss of Dwight Yorke has failed to disturb Villa's progress, the blow cushioned by the arrival of Paul Merson and Dion Dublin who, along with Alan Thompson, represent Gregory's three major buys.

If there is a doubt over more.

BLACKBURN ROVERS

ROVERS HAVE already tried on the dunce's cap this term and, although now third from bottom, performances need to improve considerably if last-in-class is to be avoided come May. Under Roy Hodgson,

Rovers were looking to escape a visit from the Premiership's inspectors for failing clubs, but Brian Kidd a great believer in lots of homework - has begun his first senior school headship with a victory and two draws.

The boy in the new blue blazer is Keith Gillespie, a £2.3m Newcastle graduate whose task is to provide under-achiever Kevin Davies, the sporadic Chris Sutton and the hard-working Nathan
Blake with multiple choices

Star pupil: Tim Sherwood.

Can do better: Kevin Davies.

in front of goal. The defence need to improve their maths and realise that a large goals against column equals rele-

Kidd has to work on attendance levels. Players marked "absent" through injury or suspension (40 yellow and four red cards already) are a too familiar register entry.

CHARLTON ATHLETIC

WHEN CHARLTON topped the Premiership after two games, the local newspaper produced a cut-out-and-keep League table. The possibility that it may be the only thing to remember the season by has grown stronger in recent weeks as Alan Curbishley's braves have slipped closer to the sort of position most people had predicted.

Amid all the talk of a difficult start, getting Southampton for the second game proved a wonderful boost for the team, the crowd and (after a S-0 win) the goal diference. Drawing at places like Newcastle. Arsenal, Liverpool and Tottenham confirmed the side's fighting Star pupil: Mark Kinsella. qualicies, but an inability to pick up points from winnable donca.



home games meant they could not afford the recent run of away defeats.

Failure to finish off some often impressive approach play has been a prime cause, with Clive Mendonca's unexpected lack of goals adding to the alarm. A new striker is a necessity.

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12 of

- 37

prants of background . .

Transfer, 3

CONTRACTOR SHIP

STATEGE OF

Can do better: Clive Men-

CHELSEA

REMAINING UNBEATEN SINCE the opening day of the season at Coventry has given Chelsea an excellent chance of landing their first championship since Ron Greenwood was centre-half in 19SS. Greenwood, whose all-English West Ham side won the FA Cup and Cup-Winners' Cup a decade later, might regret that not a single goal has been scored by an Englishman, but that is the route foreign coaches tend to

Only Manchester United can rival the depth of Giannot suffered from the loss of Brian Laudrup and Pierluigi Casiraghi - bringing in Biame Goldback for only £500,000



mark was a clever stroke. As long as Vialli under-

stands the club's passion to win the title, and is prepared to sacrifice other competitions to do it if necessary, luca Vialli's squad, which has Chelsea may be able to take advantage of United's obsession with the European Cup

Star pupil: Gianfranco Zola. from Copenhagen as soon as Can do better: Dennis Wise.

gently needed and more cre-

and greater strength in depth

COVENTRY CITY

AFTER GETTING a sniff of Uefa Cup qualification last season. Coventry's record so far has been a massive disappointment to a board who have not been frightened to spend. Yet the quality of their football has not declined by much, which just goes to show how narrow is the difference between success and failure and why manager Gordon Strachan was so wary last season of looking

beyond survival, Losing top scorer Dion Dublin to Villa came as a body blow, but the combination of Noel Whelan and Darren Huckerby, supplied from the wing by Stephen Froggatt, remains a potent attack, and Gary McAllister is back to provide class in midfield.



son continues to impress at right wing-back. None the less, after only three wins in the last 12 Premiership matches, alarm bells will be ringing for Strachan, who may live to regret not courting the vacancy at Leeds with a little more vigour. Star pupil: Roland Nilsson.

quite so effective. Can do better: Darren

DERBY COUNTY

FOR A while last season, Jim Smith's side looked irresistible, full of pace and intricate movement, a triple strike force of Dean Sturridge, Paulo Wanchope and Francesco Baiano making for many an exhilarating spectacle.

This season it is not really happening for them, Sturridge blows hot and cold and Baiano, formerly such a slippery opponent, is a pale shadow of last season's fans' favourite, Meanwhile, Wan-

Schnoor, Horatio Carbonari and Spencer Prior has brought added stability at the back, accounting for a record of only four defeats so far, Balano.



lack of a consistent cutting edge, a problem Smith needs to resolve soon if Derby are chope's unpredictable ec- to improve on last season's centricities have not been ninth place. None the less, only three seasons after mov-The arrival of Stefan ing up from the Nationwide. their future in the top flight looks secure. Star pupil: Rory Delap.

Can do better: Francesco

EVERTON

WHERE DO you start? Which is precisely the dilemma facing Bill Kenwright and any consortium wishing to buy the club off Peter Johnson. Years of mismanagement have reduced a great club into a disjointed and unhappy mess. The prospects? A struggle against relegation.

The problem facing Kenwright is money because lohnson will want at least ESOm for his majority shareholding and when you take the club's debts and urgent future spending on the team into account the figure is close to double that. For a man who hoped to purchase the club for £Sm five years ago, it is a huge financial leap.

If that does not paint an optimistic picture, It is pos- by.



itively brilliant compared to watching the team,

John Collins and Don Hutchison have been astute buys but someone who can score has to be added or bright prospects like Danny Cadamarteri and Michael Ball will become dislilusioned. Star pupil: Dave Watson. Can do better: Nick Barm-

LEEDS UNITED

FUNNY THING, managership. Three months ago Leeds supporters were mortified George Graham preferred White Hart Lane to Elland Road: now the outcry would be deafening if he returned to displace David O'Leary.

The sorcerer's apprentice nas picked up the wand an converted a functional and hard-to-beat team into one solld but another striker is urthat has accelerated the improvement and can now genuinely thrill. The team is too inexperienced to be a consistent title challenger this season, but in two years' time? How O'Leary spends the money and nurtures his young players will answer

The Martyn-Radebe-Batty- Can do better: Clyde Wijn-Hasselbaink spine is rock hard.

LEICESTER CITY

MARTIN O'NEILL continues to make silk purses from sows' ears, turning out a team that frequently appears greater than the sum of its parts. Could anyone else have rescued the career of Tony Cottee? After his drawn-out rejection of the chance to nanage Leeds, one tends to conclude that the environment is one in which he thrives, engaged on the one hand in internal political warfare, on the other in defying the odds on the field, though

would not go amiss. The exciting thing is that Jonathon he must be credited with Woodgate, Stephen McPhail, being honourable, too, Lee Bowyer, Harry Kewell and having pledged never to walk Alan Smith already look good out on a contract. enough for the Premiership. This season, respectably Star pupil: Lucas Radebe. high in the Premiership and eyeing up Wembley again in



ter have much to be happy about, although the time will surely come when the temptation to sell Emile Heskey grows too large to resist.

What is more, Neil Lennon and Muzzy Izzet, the key components of O'Neill's industrious midfield, are also attracting covetous glances. Star pupil: Neil Lennon. Can do better: Graham the Worthington Cup, Leices- Fenton.

LIVERPOOL LOOK UP last year's report

and merely change the date. Liverpool were potential trying to become substance at the end of 1997 and 12 months on they are further away from their target. The fallure to buy a centre-half has gone beyond a mystery and is approaching a scandal contributing more than anything to Roy Evans' departure. Excuses are not enough, money has to be spent, and there would be worse buys than Matt Elliott.

The full-backs are fallible, Paul Ince is a fading force and Steve McManaman should stop saying he wants to stay with the club and sign a contract. Either that or he should be put up for sale.



Liverpool is they are tantalisingly close to being a very good side. They have the best two young strikers in the Premiership, Jamle Carragher and Jamie Redknapp could become an exciting core and Patrik Berger can sometimes look world class.

Star pupil: Michael Owen. Can do better: Oyvind Leonhardsen, Jason McAreer, The Irritating thing about David James.

MANCHESTER UNITED

AS THE National Lottery puts It, maybe... Just maybe. Quallfication for the knockout phase of the European Cup was a minimum requirement and United are sufficiently well placed to make a fifth Premiership title in seven years a possibility, yet there are more buts surrounding United than for many seasons.

Most focus on the defence, which is shipping goals at an alarming rate. Jaap Stam is a commanding centre-half in search of a partner, Gary Neville is out of position and his brother Phil is having a crisis of confidence, so the sooner Ronny Johnsen and David May are

properly fit the better. Further forward the prob-



would walk into any team that did not also have Dwight Yorke and Andy Cole, while Nicky Butt must wonder what he has to do to get a regular place.

The fundamental problem is a lack of height, which could undermine ambitions at home and abroad. Star pupil: Andy Cole. lem is an embarrassment of Can do better: Ryan Giggs.

MIDDLESBROUGH

SOUTHAMPTON

AS MIDDLESBRDUGH prepared to return to the top flight, it was suggested in these pages that the key to their fate would be Paul Gascoigne - if his world fell apart, so could Boro's. It is a measure of the sig-

nificant progress Middlesbrough have made that the travails of their shavenheaded midfielder have been merely incidental in the first half of the season. Boro have not just continued on their impressive, upwardly mobile course: they now have the bonus of the other side of the Gazza coin, a slimline, influential Gas-

placed to challenge for their first appearance in Europe, if Can do better: Mikkel Beck.



not their first title. They are unbeaten in 11 matches, have won at Old Trafford for the first time in 68 years and Two years ago, at the

same stage of their last Premiership campaign, they had 15. Middlesbrough, this time, They are also promisingly are twice as good. Star pupil: Andy Townsend.

NEWCASTLE UNITED

they were going into their half-way match last season, when they needed to win their final home game to avert the threat of relegation, Newcastle continue to look not so much a team as a collection of individuals. That collection is changing, with David Batty and Keith Gillespie in pastures new and Ruud Gullit starting to land his transfer targets. Newcastle could be on the up after Christmas.

Steve Howey's return to

fitness and form has given

Gullit's team a markedly

more assured defensive look.

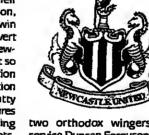
They still remain short of cre-

ative nous in midfield and, de-

spite some encouraging signs

from Stephen Glass and Noi-

SINCE SUCCEEDING the hap-



two orthodox wingers to service Duncan Ferguson and

Alan Shearer. United could also do with a little stability off the field. A major shareholder is looking to sell out and a manager commuting from a foreign country is not a recipe for long-term success.

Star pupil: Steve Howey. Can do better: Andreas berto Solano, could do with Andersson.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST

Forest look doomed to follow the recent tradition of promoted Nationwide clubs failing to make the Premiership grade. Plerre van Hooijdonk's three-month strike certainly did not help matters, but equally to blame is the lack of investment over which the maverick Dutchman made his regrettable stand.

Having arrived to fanfares last year, the new owners have cleared Forest's debts but left them to fend in the Premiership with a First Division team. Few managers have a better record with under-funded clubs than Dave Bassett, but he has enjoyed only limited spending power and not used it noticeably well. Neil Shipperley

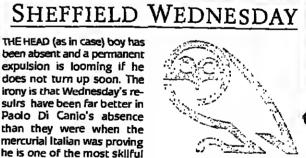


and Dougle Freedman in place of Van Hooiidonk and Kevin Campbell, for example, could hardly be described as like for like. If a buyer can be found for Van Hooijdonk, and the incoming cash used to good effect, there may still be a chance of survival, but even then only a slim one. Star pupil: Thierry Bonalair. Can do better: Pierre van Hoolidonk

THE HEAD (as in case) boy has been absent and a permanent expulsion is looming if he does not turn up soon. The irony is that Wednesday's resulrs have been far better in Paolo Di Canio's absence than they were when the mercurial Italian was proving

players in the Premiership. The reasons are varied. Danny Wilson appeared more unsettled than was expected after his move down the A61 from Barnsley and took time to impress his methods. although he was not helped by absences due to injury.

Di Canio's absence has given Benito Carbone an extended run. The theory was that two Italians made the team too lightweight and the Canio.



former was usually preferred to his compatriot, which meant Carbone played only intermittently. The difference that selection has made can be seen in his delightful goals and approach play.

Too strong to go down. Wednesday could be an outside bet for the FA Cup. Star pupil: Des Walker. Can do better: Paolo Di

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR WEST HAM UNITED

Jones led Southampton to a finishing position of 12th, the Saints had followed a fairly consistent seasonal path poor start, minor autumn rally, poor Christmas, scrappy spring and safety come May for nearly a decade.

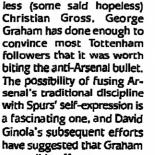
This year they're back in the mire and showing few signs yet of getting out. A welter to see why Southampton of summer changes (Kevin Davies out, Mark Hughes. Stuart Ripley, David Howelis, Hassan Kachloul all in) are Tissier chief among them)

ers and a proven attacker. Throw injury problems into the mix (last Saturday Star pupil: James Beattie. saw 14 players under treatment) and it's not too hard pick, starting with Hughes.



are struggling. They have several experienced relegation scrappers (Matt Le partly responsible, as is the and young promise, especially need for a couple of defend- striker James Beattle. They'll need both to perform consistently to stay up.

Can do better: Take your



can pull it off. He has not rushed off to

market, restricting himself so

far to strengthening the

club's weakest position by

the protracted signing of

pswich's useful full-back

Mauricio Taricco. Allan

Nielsen, like Ginola, is clear-

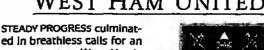
ly prepared to put himself out



for the manager and is the team's most improved player, ahead of Steffen Iversen (now unfortunately injured).

Winning the Worthington Cup, as Spurs should, to guarantee a return into Europe, would ease any lingering discomfort over "the Arsenal man". Star pupil: David Ginola.

Can do better: lan Walker.



ed in breathless calls for an adventurers reached the uncharted heights of second place at the end of last month. Subsequent defeats at Leeds and Middlesbrough have brought everyone back

Generally the defence has been solld, with lan Pearce and Rio Ferdinand excellent in front of the impressive Shaka Hislop. The midfield has shone brightly on occasions, but John Hartson's return of three goals in 15 games means that the re-

Wright has not taken off. Hartson's spat with Eyal Berkovic was one of several



worrying events off the field, often poorly handled; others included the sale of Andy Impey to Leicester behind the back of manager Harry Redknapp, who has now admitted how difficult it will be to keep Ferdinand at the club. newed partnership with lan An Important few months coming up.

Star pupil: Frank Lampard. Can do better: John Hartson.

WIMBLEDON

THREE-NIL down in 27 minutes at West Ham early in September, Joe Kinnear's side proceeded to serve notice that the old Wimbledon spirit is still alive. The home team were overwhelmed, the game was won 4-3 and those who thought that relegation was on the cards at last were forced to seek out other, less indomitable, candidates,

Wimbledon have been in the top half of the table almost ever since, outgunned only by Manchester United (5-1) and Chelsea (3-0), taking revenge on the latter to reach the Worthington Cup

The most significant factor has been a return to fitness of the strikers whose

semi-final.

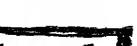


absence caused a paucity of goals last spring. Marcus Gayle has been inching back towards the form of two seasons ago and Jason Euell has benefited from a new mid-ਸਿੰeld role.

If the long term is always imponderable, short-term prospects are bright again Star pupil: Michael Hughes. Can do better: Carl Leaburn.

Reports by Guy Hodgson, Steve Tongue, Jon Culley, Simon Turnbull, Nick Harris, Nick Duxbury

⊙ **§**∰ 🛭 🗨





Ali's alchemy of the human spirit

IN DESCRIBING the scene of Cassius Clay'a coronation on 25 February 1964 in Miami Beach, Florida, a distinguished American sports columnist, the late Red Smith, wrote: "Casaius Marcellus Clay fought his way out of the horde that swarmed and leaped and shouted in the ring, climbed like a squirrel on to the red velvet ropes and brandished his still-gloved hand aloft. 'Eat your words,' he howled to the working press rows, 'Eat your words.'"

Smith's words, the words of practically every reporter et ringside. Words thet carried resentment of Clay's uniquely extravagant style, his brashness and obvious contempt for the racist convention that he should be grateful for a chance to rise above disenfranchisement.

At least Smith had the grace to edd: "Nobody ever had e better right [to how! at the press].

"In a mouth still dry from excitement of the most astounding upset in many roaring years, the words don't taste good, but they taste better than they read. The words written here, and practically everysquash Cassius Clay like e never saw John L Sullivan run

BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

Today: Boxing

As David Remnick states in The King of the World (Random House), not the most comprehensive or revealing, but beyond doubt the most elegantly crafted hook about Muhammad Ali (so far only available in the United States): "some of Clay's other detractors could barely bring themselves to admit that they had been so wrong about him.

"Dick Young's column for seethed with resentment, as if the outcome bad been a conspiracy designed specifically to offend him. If Cassius wants me to say he's the greatest, all right, I'll say it.' Young groused in print, 'hut I'll say he scored should be." the greatest retreating victory since the Russians suckered Napoleon into a snow bank. I never saw Joe Louis run away and win, or Rocky Marciano, where else until the impossible and I'm sure my father never became the unbelievable truth, saw Jack Dempsey run eway said Sonny Liston would and win, and my grandfather

away and win."

American friends in this trade who think Remnick spends too much time putting down sportswriters of that era point out that Ali was a culture shock, a dramatic departure from the custom of onedimensiooal fighters.

They miss not only the irony of Ali's lasting fame as a boxer hut that of his subsequent passage from reviled draft-dodger and rebble-rouser to all-American hero.

As for allegiance to the Nation of Islam, his apparent acceptance of a philosophy that damned the white man as e devil, Remnick quotes Ali's ring doctor Ferdie Pacheco. "He's not a hater," Pacheco tells the the [New York] Daily News author. "But he's always marched to his own drummer. He sees things as he wants to. Whatever is best for him, whatever ideology is best for him, whatever programme is best for the way be thinks his life

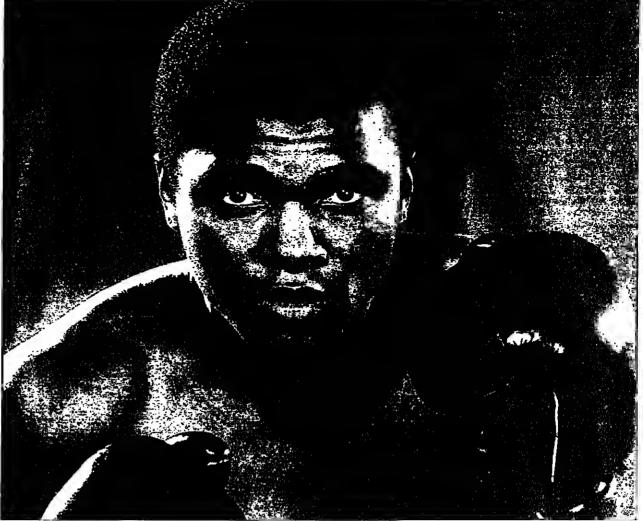
> Ali treads slowly now, each careful step a measure of the difficulties inflicted by Parkinson's disease. But in Remnick's stylish prose there is resurrection. Although Ali is followed no further along the yellow brick road than his defeat of Floyd Patterson in November 1965 it is enough.

Editor of New Yorker mag azine, Remnick won a Pulitzer Prize for Lenm's Tomb: The fall of Communism. With thia penetrating study of events that announced Ali as the sports figure of the century and a symbol of black consciousness he lives up to his credentials

Nobody on this side of the Atlantic who was assigned to charting Ali's progress got closer to him than the ITV boxing commentator Reg Gutteridge.

There are many anecdotes about their relationship in Gutteridge's entertaining autobiography Upperents and Dazes (John Blake Publishing, £16.99). When recovering in hospital from a serious illness Gutteridge woke up one evening to find Ali standing over him. Hearing in London that Gutteridge was unwell Ali insisted on seeing him at a late hour. His senses by then impaired, Ali placed a hand on Gutteridge's brow and mumbled a Muslim prayer.

It came as no surprise to boxing people when Naseem Hamed split with his Irish mentor Brendan Ingle. The turbulence that entered their relationship after Hamed became established as e major



Muhammad Ali was a culture shock but his fame is lasting - and not just because of his boxing

The Paddy and the Prince (Random House, £16).

Considered by Gene Tunney to have possessed "the keenest and most analytical brain that quis of Queensberry rules.

documented by Nick Pitt in James J Corbett caused a tech-emigranta. Corbett brought nical revolution in boxing wben he defeated John L Sullivan in 1892 to become the first heavyweight champion under Mar-

science to a sport that hed previously been regarded as a brutal test of raw courage and strength.

The fascinating story of

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(Ref: CPO)

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hour running of our refuge.

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figure in the sport is vividly ever graced e prize ring". Born in California to Irish Corbett's remarkable career in and out of the ring is well told by Patrick Myler in Gentleman Jim Corbett - The Truth Behind a Boxing Legend (Robson Books, £17.95).

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Successful candidates will have a professional manner and cellent interpersonal skills. Own car and telephone are essential. The work is hourly paid at attractive rates plus expenses. Interviewers are required to be available for at least three days and three evenings per week. The retirement age is 65.

Send a postcard with your name, address and telephone number to SSD Recruitment & Training Unit, Office for National Statistics (D1/08), 1 Drummond Gate, London

Interviewing and training will take place throughout January and February.

GRADUATE

team on

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CB2 1EW email: dk10012@cam.ac.uk to arrive not

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JOINT SERVICE LIAISON OFFICE, BRITISH FORCES GERMANY

ACCOMMODATION LIAISON OFFICER

The main function of the Joint Service Lieison Office (JSLO) is liaison between the British Forces in Germany (BFG) and the German Authorities at Federal, Lander and local levels, in accordance with mutual obligations arising from International Agreements.

The Accommodation Liaison Officer 1 (LO1) post is located in Bonn, Germany and is graded at Senior Executive Officer level. The key duties of the post are:

Assisting and advising BFG on the application of NATO Status of Forces Agreement and Supplementary Agreement, German political, legal and procedural matters relating to the acquisition and release of accommodation. planning/construction and environmental protection on BFG administered property.

Liaison with other NATO Sending States Forces on accommodation matters, construction and environmental issues.

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The stating salary for the position of LO1 will be £21,273 pa with the potential for performance related increases. A Recruitment and Retention Allowance of £1,776 pa will be payable. Applicants domiciled in the UK will also receive a non-taxable Cost of Living Addition (COLA), which ranges from £4,030 to £7,260 depending on marital status. COLA is variable and subject to adjustment to reflect changes in

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TROUBLED TIMES

1 Who got into trouble for saying that playing conditions were such that "I felt like I had smoked 10 joints"? 2 Who saw red in his national stadium but returned less than four weeks later to inspire his country to a historic triumph?

3 Who was sent home from France after claiming that some of his colleagues had become "untouchables"?

4 Who whistled up a storm by pre-tending to play a flute? 5 Who collected his 12th and 13th yellow cards and his first red in his 44th

RECORD BREAKERS

England match?

1 Who needed only 574 attempts to become one of the 24 men of the cen-

2 ... and who needed 38 attempts to achieve his century landmark? 3 Whose elevation in March was the quickest in 110 years of history? 4 Which South African No 10 performed a feat equalled only by an Englishman in 1884 and an Australian in 1902?

5 Who got into double figures for the first time in his England career at the age of 32?

THE WEMBLEY WAY

1 On what occasion did no Englishman feature in a match at Wemhley which saw one team reach a half-century and their opponents fail

2 Who earned a place at Wembley thanks to a strike by a Liberian? 3 Which Wembley final ended with a British coach guiding a team to victory for the first time since 1986?

4 When was an 18-year-old Englishman upstaged at Wembley by a 23-year-old Chilean?

5 Which Italian helped his side lift a trophy hy scoring at Wembley for the second time in 10 months?

WINNERS AND LOSERS

1 Whose limited talent earned them two trophies in the space of 24 hours?

2 Who scored the goal which brought back to London a trophy which his club had last won 27 years ago? 3 Who took 26 seconds off the record

and 374 yards? 4 Which Englishman triumphed at English Turn to record his first victory at only his eighth attempt?

for an annual race over four miles

5 When did a Tankard fail in a cup? GROUNDS FOR DEBATE

1 Who headed west after leaving a ground where rugby had been played for more than 130 years? 2 ...and who left a ground which had staged rugby for 112 years to move

3 Who moved from their inner-city succeeding where 17 teams before home to a £270m stadium built on them had failed? works site?

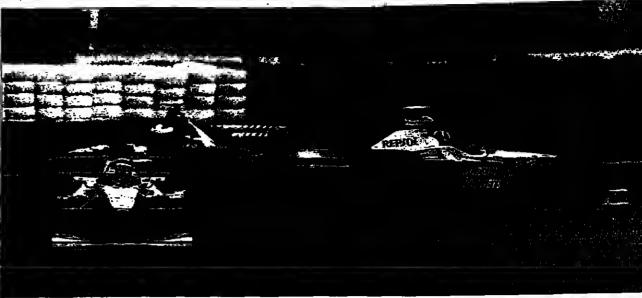
4 Why was there a chorus of "Vial- 13 successes? playing at Stamford Bridge? ninth month of the season?

FAME FOR 15 MINUTES

Why did the following make the headlines?

- 1 Simon Fenn 2 Lleyton Hewitt
- 4 Sean Olsson 5 Steve Simonsen
- 3 Giuliano Grazioli

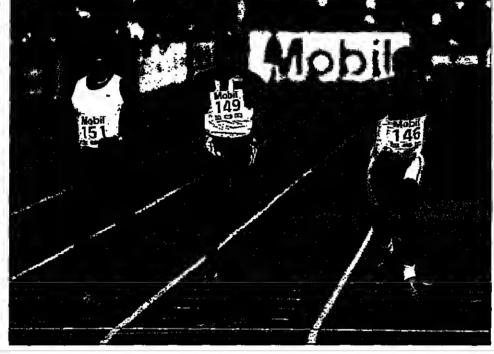












THE GLOBAL GAME



END OF THE LINE

a chemically polluted former gas- 3 Which player paid the final penal- 17 unsuccessful attempts?

li, Vialli" during a match at Goodi- 4 Who enjoyed double delight after 9 Whose run of 63 consecutive apson Park when Chelsea were ending a run of 37 international matches without a goal?

years and 146 consecutive appear-

in with footballing neighbours who 1 Who finally won gold after a 6 ... and whose run ended after 1 What run dating back over 18 challenge of a 42-year-old Ulster- 1 Tm going to feel every minute of see how he feit. The evidence is promptly won their championship sequence of 13 silvers or bronzes? 2,632 consecutive returns to base 2 Who prevented a world record by dating back to 1982?

36-year wait for a trophy?

back?

5 Who failed to win at home until the 5 Whose major run ended after 37 10 Whose nine-year winning run ended when a Swede and a Norwegian scored goals for a rival firm?

1 Which Czech went Down Under 4 Which 37-year-old bucked his in the first hour? to hreak his duck at the age of 30? own previous form in the event to 6 Which 27-year-old became the 2 Which 31-year-old kept his hottle in Bordeaux to kick his team to a famous victory?

ry in San Diego? 3 ...and which Australian retired 5 Which American achieved finally

7 Which player from Belarus finally heat her German opponent after

GOLDEN OLDIES

after kicking his team to final glory? major success at the age of 41?

ty for failing at the 14th attempt after 8 Who cheered hearts by ending a

pearances was ended by a had

ed Ireland's first success in Lon-3 What began in Thailand in January and visited Australia. South Africa, Scotland and Dubai before

finishing the year in November in Spain?

4 Which three Britons took less than 21 seconds to clean up in Budapest?

5 At which Test match did no more wickets fall after three went down

Hickie end in Paris?

inspire his team to one of the first Frenchman to triumph in Surhiggest upsets in his sport's histo- rey in June when he held off the Britain?

years did the Irishman Denis man? 7 Which 22-year-old Scotsman con- last two so it's going to be very nice. 2 Who was the 28-year-old farmer's quered the world for the first time We're going to show the French daughter from Cavan who recordby beating an Irishman in boys how to party."

Sheffield? television viewers watch live cov- ball comes second to cricket, it erage of a First Division match in was a dream opportunity to play the Nationwide League in Sep- here."

tember? over 3,711 kilometres to become the things like that."

33 years? 10 Which American, born in Cana- quite there mentally - hut he is da of English and German parents, now."

gave up trying to conquer Ameri- 5 "I went out on a limb for him. I

3 "I don't care whether you're Alan

9 Who spent three weeks racing Shearer or The Pope, you don't do first Italian to triumph in Paris for 4 "I just felt in the early stages 9 "Not going past Sir Don probably

it this time. I can't remember the

of the tournament he was not

ca, moved to Japan, and came tried so many times to make him within a stroke of conquering see what he needed to do, at the age

need to apologise. Everyone could like punching him then."

WHO SAID IT?

there for everyone, for him more than anybody, of how much it hurt him and the team." 7 "I was very nervous, to he

2 "Coming from Tohago, which honest. I was just trying to focus my 8 Why did more than 100 million is such a small island where foot- mind, trying to stay cool, not to get excited, not to tire myself, not to worry. I knew I needed only to finish second to win the title, but that made me uncomfortable."

8 "I'm a hit of a jammy git. Tom Jenks should have ridden him."

saved me from getting stabbed in the street. I reckon I get a minimum of 10 people a day coming up to me and kissing me and telling me how great it was I didn't go past

match to apologise, saying he was 6 "He couldn't talk, but he didn't sorry that I had been sent off. I felt

BOXING DAY

FOOTBALL

A O INEX LL

3 O unless stated

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

1 Arsenal v West Ham (12.0)

Blackburn v Ascon Villa [6.0)

2 Coventry v Tottenham

3 Everton v Derby

4 Manchester Utd v Notton Forest

5 Mixidlesbrough v Lwerpool

6 Newcastle v Leeds

7 Southampton v Cheese (12.0)

Southampton v Chelsea (12.0) Wimbledon v Charlton

Botton v oranics Crewe v Bury Huddersfield v Grimsby 14 Ipswich v Portsmouth
15 Oxford Utd v Crystal Palace
16 OPR v Norwich (12.0)
17 Stockport v Barnsley (1.0)
18 Swindon v Wolves
19 Tammere v Sunderland

Watford v Bristol City (12.0)...... West Bromwich v Port Vale (1.0) SECOND DIVISION 22 Blackpool v Wigan (1.0)
23 Bristol Rovers v Gillingham
24 Chesterfield v Oldham

THIRD DIVISION 36 Cambridge Utd v Rotherham 37 Cardiff v Shrewsbury (12.0) ... 38 Exeter v Torquay (11.0).... 39 Halifax v Darlington (2.0)

Leyton Orient v Swansea (1.30)

Mansfield v Scarborough Rochdale v Carlisle Inthorpe v Hartiepool othend v Peterborough (1.0) SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

43 Rangers v St Johnsti SCOTTISH FIRST DIVISION

44 Airdre v Raich
45 Falkirk v Stranraer
46 Greenock Morton v Clydebank
47 Hamilton v St Mirren

Hibernian v Ayr ...

FOOTBALL CONFERENCE ncaster v Leek 👑

Famborough v Hayes Forest Green v Yeovil Kettering v Hednesford Kidderminster v Hereford (12.80) ... Kingstonlan v Woking (12.0) Northwich v Morecambe

- Welling v Dover (12.0)

RYMAN LEAGUE Premier Division: St
Albans v Bishop's Stottford (11.0). Albans v Bishop's Stortford (11.0).

UNIBOND LEAGUE Premier Division:
Bamber Bridge v Lancaster: Blyth Spartans v Garezhead (11.30); Chorley v
Winsford Utd; Colweyn Bay v Leigh Rivil:
Frickley v Wintby Iowin, Garesborough Trinity v Worksop; Gurseley v Emley; Hyde Utd
v Stalybridge; Marline v Accrington Stanley: Runcom v Albrincham: Spennymoor
v Bishop Aucidand First Divisions Afriction
v Martiock; Ashton v Stocksbridge; Bradford Park Avenue v Lincoln Utd (1.0); Congleton v Burscough; Flinton v Trafford;
Great Harwood v Parstey, Oretna v Whit-

FIXTURES ley Bay (1.0); Harrogate Town v Eastwood Town; Hucknall v Belper; Netherfield v Oroylsden; Radcliffe v Wilton. DR MARTENS LEAGUE Premier Dist

DR MARTERS LEAGUE Frantier Defi-sions Bath City v Sallsbury; Bromsgrove v Worcester City; Burton Albion v Gres-ley Rovers (11.30); Cambridge City v Roth-weil (1.0); Gloucester City v Merityn Tydfil; Grantham v Ilheston Town (12.0); Hast-ings v Crawley; King's Lynn v Boston Urd: Nuneaton v Atherstone (12.0); Tarnworth v Halesowen Town (12.0); Weymouth v Dorchester.

Dorchester.

PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLANI
LEAGUE: Brora Rangers v Wick Academy: Clachnacuddin v Fort William; Deveronvale v Buckle Thistle: Forres Mechanics v Naim County, Freserburgh v Peternead; Huntly v Cove Rangers: Lossiemouth v Eign City: Rothes v Keith.

SNURNOFF INISH LEAGUE Premier Division: Coleraine v Ballymena; Crusaders v Cliftomille: Glenavon v Portadown; Linfield v Gentoran; Omagh v Newry. First Division: Bangor v Ards; Distillery v Carrick: Lame v Ballydare; Limavady v Dungannon Swifts.

LAND Premier Division: Finn Harps v Sigo Rosers (7.30): Sherbourne v Derry City (3.15). Giy (3.15).

LEAGUE OF WALES: Aberystwyth v
Haverfordwest (2.30): Bangor Giry v
Caemarfon Town (2.30): Bany Town v Inter Cable-Tel Cardiff (11.30): Comwy v Rhyl
(2.30): Holywell v Comah's Obay (2.30):
Newtown v Caersws (2.30): TNS
Llansant/fraid v Rhayader Town (2.30):
Market V Rhayader Town (2.30):

HARP NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRE-

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE Pre-raler Invision: Beckenham Town v Crockenhall (11.30). v Crockenhill (11.30).

UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES

LAGUE Premier Division: Boston v Holbeach (1.30); Bourne v Blackstone (1.30);
Long Buckby v Ford Sports; N Spencer v
Buckingham (12.0); Potton v Storfold

(11.0); St Neots v Eynesbury (12.0); Spalding v Yardey (1.0); S & L Corby v Desborough (11.30); Wellingborough v Cogenhoe

(11.0); Wootron v Kempston (11.0);

UNIDET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE
First Divisions Broadbridge v Presson;
Chichester v Portfield; Eastbourne To v
Langney; Hailsham v Eastbourne Utd hampton v Wick (11.0): Ringmer v Saitdean (11.0): Selsey v Pagham (11.0): Whitehawk v Shoreham.

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE Premie Division: Barnstable v Bideford: Pictor NORTH WESTERN TRAINS LEAGUE Hrst Divisions Atherton Colls v Atherton LR: Cheadle v Vauchall GM: Kidsgrove v Newcaste T: Maine Road v Saiford: Moss-ley v Glossop: Nantwich v Leek CSOR; Prescot v Bootle; Ramsbottom v Rossendale: Skeimersdale v St Helens: Workington v Holker (1.0).

Prescot v Boote; Kamsbottom v Rossendale; Skeimersdale v St Helens; Workington v Holker (1.0).

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE Premier Division: Arroid v Pontefract; Detaby v Armthorpe: Glasshoughton v Buston; Hallamv Bingg (11.0); Liversedge v Eccleshill: Moltby v Ossert Alblon; North Ferriby v Shelfrield; Ossert Town v Sefby (12.0); Staveley v Pickering (12.0); Thackley v Garforth.

Selby (12.0): Stavetey v Pickering (12.0): Thackley v Garforth.

INTERLINK EXPRESS MIDLAND ALLIANCE: Barwell v Sandwell (12.0): Halcsowen it v Pershore: Kings Norton v Boldmere: Knypersley v Bridgnorth: Pelsall v Stourpott: Rushall v Oldgury: Shifnal v Chasecown; Stapenhill v Willenhall; Stratford v Rocester; West Midlands Police v Wednesfield.

JEMSON WESSEX LEAGUE First Divisione BAT v AFC fotton (11.0): Bemerton Heath v Whichurch (12.0): Cowes v East Cowes (11.30): Eastleigh v Hamble (11.0): Fareharn v Gosport (11.30): Lymington & New Milton v Brockenhurst (1.0): Moneyfields v Portsmouth RN (11.30): Thatcham v AFC Newbury: Wimborne v Downton (1.0).

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN LEAGUE First Divisions Bedington v Consett: Billingham Syntholia (11.0): Chester Le Street v Easington (12.0): Gusborough v Marske (11.0): Newcastle 8 s v Morpest: Penrith v Tow Law; Seaham v Dunston (11.0): Shildon v West Auckland: South Shields v Jarrow Roofing (11.0): Stockon v Crook.

FOURTH TEST (Melbourne): Australia v England (First day of five).

RUGBY LEAGUE

ANSWERS, PAGE 14

FRIENDLY MATCHES: Featherstone v Castleford (11.30): Leeds v Halifax (11.30). RUGBY UNION

ANGLO-WELSH FRIENDLIES Northampton v Cardiff (3.0) Swansea v Bath (2.30) WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE
PREMIER DIVISION
2.30pm unless stated
Caerphilly v Newport
Ebbw Vale v Aberavon

UNI-BALL TROPHY Group A: Man-chester Glants v Tharnes Valley Tigers (7.0).

ICE HOCKEY SENONDA SUPERLEAGUE: Notong-ham Panthets v Cardiff Devils (3.0): Sherfield Steelers v Manchester Stori (3.0): Newcastle Riverkings v Ayr Scottish

10 "He came up to me after the of 31, to deal with the modern

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. 63---

Hall adamant that Newcastle is not for sale

Falcons, Sir John Hall, last night dismissed speculatioo that he was planning to sell his 76 per cent stake in the club. As the reigning champions prepared for their Christmas campaign, their straight talking proprietor was explaining why the club was not up for sale.

"This coming year is going to be a watershed in the professional game." explained Sir John, "because it is when we expect the European Commission judgment which will give us the right to organise ourselves within the Rughy

BY DAVID LLEWELLYN

Football Union as professional

"These rights will allow us to own television broadcasting and commercial deals. And the International Rughy Board would have to recognise that they are not above European law. There is nothing in this talk of selling the club. I have fought this battle for the last three years, it would be a nonsense to pull out now." Newcastle are, however, in

contention. They are six points which is likely to be eight by the time they trot out for Sunday's home match against Allied Dunbar Premiership strugglers West Hartlepool, since the Tigers tackle bottom-hutone Bedford on Boxing Day.

"We are saying that this League is open," said their coach, Steve Bates. "We are not out of the hunt and in some ways we are more threatening than last year."

They will have to threaten without Gary Armstrong, the

Scotland international scrumhalf, for the next few weeks after he chipped a bone in a thumb. Without him and understudy Allen Chilteo (two cracked fin-

gers), it looked as if Bates might have to dust off his boots and turn out, but at vesterday's training session Hall Charlton, an England Schools 18 Group player last season, lined up with the first-choice players and looks a good bet to start his first Premiership match. He was on the bench for the Anglo-Welsh game against Cardiff last month.

Leicester, still without the

injured Joel Stransky and Will Greenwood, field an unchanged team for only the second time this season. They will be very wary of Bedford, who, under the joint guidance of the recently departed Geoff Cooke and Paul Turner, gave the Tigers a real scare early in the season on

"They were not easy as we found down there," admitted Dean Richards, Leicester's team manager. "In fact they probably deserved to win that

their own patch.

"They countered well and played some expansive rugby,

we only won with a try late in landed match-clinching goals injury time." The Tigers should be a dif-

fereot proposition in front of a full house at Welford Road. But Richards is cautious and probably with good cause. "We are happy to be top," he said, "but our form before the mooth of internationals was far better than it is now. We have had a lot of injuries as well over the last few weeks, but we have come through it winning our last two

Much of that can be put down to the form of Tim Stimpson with the boot. The full-back

without Joel and Will"

against Newcastle a couple of weeks ago and followed that up with six penalties to sort out the close-fought Kingsbolm contest last weekend.

At least Bedford will have the services of Jason Forster, their dynamic Wales A flanker. The player said yesterday that bis proposed transfer to Pontypridd was definitely off. Forster, who is cootracted to Bedford until May, has a verbal agreement with Rudi Straeuli, the cluh's director of rugby, which would allow him to go if a club

in Newport." explained Forster. "Having played for Wales A against Argeotina I am keen (o press my claim for a place in the full squad."

In Reading on Boxing Day Richmood take on a revitalised and dangerous London Irish, who ran them close in October. Richmond are still without their captain and No 8 Ben Clarke ifractured cheekbone) and the Wales lock, Craig Quinnell, is a doubt. The Exiles field the side which ended an impressive sixmatch unbeaten run by Harle-



Petra Korda in action at Wimbledon, where it has emerged he tested positive for nandrolone, a substance which can speed recovery from injury

Korda's innocence disputed

EXPERT OPINION was divided yesterday as to whether Petr Korda, who tested positive for *teroids during this year's Wimhledon, could have taken

the drug innocently The 30-year-old Czech, who is the reigning Australian Open champion, was stripped of the rankings points and prize money he earned by reaching the Wimbledon quarter-finals, hut avoided suspension hecause he denied taking the

drug, nandrolone, knowingly. "I wish to state categoricalthat I am not a drugs cheat and would never seek to obtain a competitive advantage over niv fellow professionals by such means," he said. "I am delighted that the committee has TENNIS

Dr Joe Doust, a physiologist at the Department of Sports Science in Brighton, said: "It's certainly possible he could have taken the drug without knowing. There are two ways of administering it, by injection or tablet. It's perfectly reasonable he would not know what he's taking. It's surprising how many sportsmen these days just do what they're told."

He added: "I think what happened in the Tour de France this summer shows that whatever the spiel by sports medical teams, they are the people behind doping when it happens, not the athletes."

probably given the steroid not over a long period to huild muscle hulk, hut to hasten recovery from injury and allow

him to train harder. In Australia, where Korda is due to defend his Australian Open title next month, experts were less ready to accept Korda's story.

Vicki Kapernick, a spokesperson for the Australian Sports Drug Agency, said nandrolone was an artificial version of the hormone testosterone which can only be injected. "It has a performance-enhancing effect and helps in musclehuilding and recovery from in-

jury while training," she said. A sports medicine practitioner, Dr Peter Larkins, said he

found it hard to believe that what was in it," McNamee said. Korda had not known what substance he had taken.

the story: 'I didn't know where players have got to be vigilant." it came from'?" Larkins said. "Elite athletes have a lot of people wanting to help them and there is a lot of shaky advice around. Maybe he could have been that naive. It just doesn't gel with me, that he didn't know what it was, especially at that level. That wouldn't get you a defence in the eyes of the International Olympic Committee."

The Australian Open tournament director, Paul McNamee, said Korda had been given the absolute minimum penalty.

"He might have been given a cocktail of some sort in an injection and not been told exactly

"But it is generally not an excuse if you didn't know; it's part be three months. "How often have we heard of the fabric of any sport and

the International Tennis Federation prepares to cast its in the Olympics. I had to discuss vote for a unified anti-doping programme for sport.

The FTF will be represented at an anti-doping conference organised by the IOC on 2 February next year, while Brian Tobin, the ITF president, attended an IOC working session on the subject in Lausanne on 27 November. "The main difference in the proposed policy," Tobin said, "is that the minimum penalty for hard substances higher-class substances - would

be a minimum of two years' sus-

cial drugs and so on, would still "A clause was added on the

day that said any sport not ad-The Korda affair comes as hering to this unified policy would not be able to participate that with our partners [the men's and women's professional tours). Having spoken to them, I don't see any problem at all, and I'm sure we'll be supporting the unified programme.

"Tennis has the most complete anti-doping policy of any sport, because it covers all of Mike Hussey. the professional areas, the Women's Tennis Association, the Association of Tennis Professionals' Tour, the ITF, and even our junior areas. We're dead against cheats in tennis."

Match-fixing probe moves to Australia

THE PAKISTANI investigation into match-fixing will sit in Australia in January to take evidence from Shane Warne and Mark Waugh

The Australian and Pakistani cricket hoards announced yesterday that the two Australian Test players. as well as Alan Crompton, the former Australian Cricket Board chairman, would go before the inquiry on 8 January.

The two players, who have accused Salim Malik, the former Pakistan captain, of offering them a hribe, were ordered to appear after admitting two weeks ago that they accepted money from an illegal Indian bookmaker for information on pitch and weather conditions during a tour of the subcontinent in 1994.

The Pakistan judge in charge of the investigation agreed to travel to Australia after the two Australians declined to go to Pakistan and attempts to set up a live video link failed.

Salim Malik has also been given the option to travel to Australia at his own expense if he wanted to cross-examine the

The ACB also announced that its own investigation into cricket and betting would begin on 12 January and was expected to last for at least three

The ACB ordered the inquiry after the admissions of Warne and Waugh and revelations by other players that they had also been approached by bookmakers hoth on the subcontinent and in Australia.

The ACB has been criticised for its handling of the affair after it was revealed that it kept secret details of the fines inposed on Warne and Waugh until journalists broke the story just hefore the third Ashes Test two weeks ago. Despite that the inquiry, headed by Roh O'Regan QC. the former chairman of the Queensland state's Criminal Justice Commission. will be conducted in private with the findings due to he made public in February

O'Regan said he wanted to speak with everyone who had represented Australia since 1992 as well as a number of ACB

Somerset set to pick their overseas player

SOMERSET HAVE announced a shortlist of three Australians from which they will select their overseas player for next season. The county will choose from Tasmania opener Jamie Cox. New South Wales allrounder Shane Lee and young Western Australia batsman

The Somerset chief executive, Peter Anderson, and the county's new cricket chairman, Vic Marks, will interview all three players during the fifth Ashes Test, which starts in Sydney on 2 January, "We will insist that our overseas player is available for the season," said Anderson, determined that World Cup calls will not roh his team early next summer.

overseas recruit the chance to be captain after Peter Bowler relinquished the post earlier this month.

Michael Gough, of Durham, will captain the England Under-19s for the tour of New Zealand this winter. The 15-man squad will play three Test matches and three one-day internationals. The first Test is in New Ptymouth (2.5 Fehruary), the second in Wellington 18-11 February: and the third in Dunedin

(18-21 Fehruary).

ENGLAND UNDER-19: M. Gough (Durham, Capt). I Bell (Warks). I Flanagan (Essex). M. Carberry (Surey). R. Dawson (Forks). G. Haywood (Sussex). J. Maunders (Midda). M. Symington (Durham). J. Fearlek (Lancs). M. Wallace (wkt. Glam). G. Bridge (Durham). M. Rulbeck (Soms). R. Logan (Northants). J. Tacker (Soms). M. Whiley (Notts)

the English Sports Council yesterday, the Sports Minister, 3 ny Banks, was accused of sexparent determination to appoint

The 1984 Olympic javelin champion, who campaigns for the Labour Party, was appointed yesterday by Chris Smith, the Secretary of State at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, along with Brigid Simmonds, chief executive of Business In Sport and Leisure.

allegations against Banks and Smith. The pair have rejected the recommendations of a se-Jection panel saying that the 20.000-a-year, part-time chairmanship, should be a choice between the acting chairman. Trevor Brooking, and the for-

ATHLETICS

The winner of this year's London and Amsterdam marathons, Catherina McKiernan, will not be defending her Bupa Great North Cross-Country offe

BASKETBALL The Budweiser League's bottom club, Edinburgh Rocks, have signed the former Manchester Giants and

Wedel to make room for the 30-year

BOXING

castle Eagles forward Michael

on 2 January because of injury.

SPORTS POLITICS

a five-person shortlist with three women - Sanderson, Simmonds and the former netball international, Sue Campbell, of the Youth Sports Trust. An announcement about the vacant post was due two weeks ago, but instead it is to be readvertised. Brooking has been asked to continue as interim

The fact that Banks and

be made solely on merit."

THERE WILL he more of a dayour of Christmas past than Christmas future as four Yorkshire clubs cling to the last spries of tradition by playing on

The biggest holiday derby of them all has bitten the dust this year, having been reduced to farce wheo St Helens fielded a reserve side against Wigan last Christmas. At most other clubs as well, coaches and players have got their way and left the deep mid-winter well alone.

Leeds, who host Halifax on Boxing Day morning, have special reasons for hucking the trend. They need to get some value for money out of Weodell Sailor, who, thanks to the machinations of the rugby union authorities, is being paid for two rugby league friendlies hut not for his regular appearances for Leeds Tykes.

RUGBY LEAGUE BY DAVE HADFIELD

The Brisbane Broncos and Australia winger admits - at least when talking to league people - that he has not been particularly stimulated by his experience of rugby union. He can be expected to return to his code of choice with a sharpened appelite on Saturday.

Of greater long-term significance are the debuts of two players who, unlike Sailor, will figure in Leeds' Super League campaign. The former Great Britain hooker, Lee Jackson, will make his first appearance since arriving from Newcastle Knights.

The hugely promising Karl Pratt, signed from Feather stone this winter, will also make his bow. Although he played on the wing for Rovers last season.

his aspirations are as a high class stand-off. He is likely to play in both roles on Saturday. although it is intriguing to see him listed to start at stand-off. Another player with a dazzling future in prospect, Kevin Sinfield, is at loose forward, with

four other members of Leeds' all-cooquering Academy team among the substitutes. Halifax have newcomers of their own, notably the utility back, Graham Holroyd, signed from Leeds. The match, and the one between Castleford and Featherstone kicking off at the

same time, will be the first played under the new rules agreed by the game's international federation. That will mean reverting to the non-scoring side kicking off and rewarding long-range touch-finding kicks by giving the kicking side the feed at the subsequent scrum.

IN BOXING DAY'S INDEPENDENT



FOOTBALL

Alan Curbishley talks to Glenn Moore about Charlton Athletic's fight for Premiership

Steve Tongue on great Boxing Day matches of the past

Plus a comprehensive guide to the Boxing Day programme, including our match-by-match



RACING

Greg Wood assesses the field for one of the highlights of the racing year, the King George VI Chase at Kempton

Full cards for the 10 Boxing Day meetings, featuring our exclusive form guide

TENNIS

John Roberts on the year of Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski

Banks attacked over new post | Sailor's Boxing Day pay-day

AS TESSA SANDERSON joined

a woman to lead the Council

The appointments were overshadowed, though, by the BY ALAN HUBBARD

mer world karate champion. Geoff Thompson. These were the two men on

Thompsoo claimed yester day he was a victim of "girl power gone mad". Thompson, 40, who is black, said: "In an age of political correctness it seems I may be the right colour but the wrong sex. In the past I've been excluded by social and

ethnic identity but now it is because of gender.

Smith have declined to accept the recommendation of the panel chaired by the former Test cricketer, Raman Subba Row, has angered several leading figures in sport. It is believed that Banks wanted to appoint Sanderson, 42, despite her lack of experience in sport administration, seeing her as an ideal figurehead in his campaign to secure recognition for

Richard Spring, the Opposition sport spokesman, condemned the decisioo to shelve the appointment. "This is absolutely shambolic and typical of the way the department is handling sport. English sport deserves the best person to run it and the appointment should

Boxing Day.

minority groups in sport.

SPORTING DIGEST Leatherhead S. Pizzia Cop Second round:
Basingstoke Town 3 Bognor Regis Town 0;
Harrow Borough 1 Romford 3: Walton 6;
Hersham 2 Slough Town 0, Postponed:
Wordring v Aldershor Town. Dr Millar Trophy second round: Postponed: Abrigdon Town v Egham Town. Dr Millar Tension Town v Egham Town. Dr Millar Town of Progressey Rowers 0 Tamworth 4 (Tamworth win 8-1 on aggregate). Second round: Folkestone Invito 2 Hastings Town 1;
Grantham Town 0 Rothwell Town 0: Halesower Town 0 Bilston Town 2. UNI-BOWD LEAGUE President's Cop Second round: Guiseley 1 Droylsden 2. Second round: Guiseley 1 Droylsden 2. Second round replays Stalyting 2 (Gainsborough 1. JEMSON WIESSEK LEAGUE CLAP Second round second leg: Thatcham 2 Wirnborne Town 2; Moneyfields 3 Bernerton Heath 1. SCREENWIND DRESCT LEAGUE Presider Dhalsdon: Brislington 1 Tournon

Heath 1. SCREWIFOR DIRECT LEAGUE Presider Divisions Brisingson 1 burnton Jown 3. Postspoedic Bishop Sutton v Brid-port. JERNSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier Division: Newmarket Town 2 Ely City 2: Soham Town Rangers 2 Sudbury Iown 2. Postsponest Lowescoft Town v Great Varmouth Town. CALOR COUNTY ANTHUM SHELD Charter-Rinals: Glentoran 1 Ballymena 0; Lame 1 Linfield 5. PONTINS LEAGUE CUP Group Five: Oldham 1 Stockport 3. AWON INSURANCE COMBINATION First Divisions Bourremouth 4 Southampton 1; Futham 1 Wimbledon 0; Peterborough 4 Ipsuich 2: Portsmouth 0 Gillingham 1; Warford 2 West Ham 2. THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP Third TUESDAY'S LATE RESULTS AUTO WINDSCREENS SHELD NO TURESDAY'S LATE RESULTS
AUTO WINDOSCREENS SHIELD Northern section, first round: Nots County
O Hull City 1. RYMAN LEAGUE Premier
Division: Carshalton 2 Enfield 1. League
Cup second round: Hendon 2 Gravesend

round: Aston Villa S Hull City 1. Taird round replays: Newcastle 3 Bury 1: Wim-bledon 2 Oxford 0. E0HENTION MATCH-ES: Catalonia XI 5 Nigena 0: Basque XI 5 Uruguay 1: Andaluca XI 2 Foreign Se-lect XI 0; Canary Islands XI 1 Latvia 0.

The Stewart Grand Prix team yes-

ZETTERS: Troble chance: 21pts: 6:93.45; 20 £6.45; 19 £0.85. Four aways: £20.90; Eight bones: £3.30; Four draws: £52.70. Easy \$50.27 £3.20. All draws: £55.27 £0. Easy \$50.27 £3.25. Lucky numbers: 7, 26, 15, 19, 1, 3. BRITTERS: Troble chance: 21pts: £353.10; 20 £3.00; 19 £0.75. Four draws: £27.00; Five aways: £6.20; Eight house: £7.60.

LTTLEWOODS: Treble chance: 21pts £1,977.45; 20 £36.35; 19 £4.20; 18 £1.20 Half-time results: 21pts £1,604.30 VERNONS: Troble chance: 21 pts £2,919.50: 20 £25.75; 19 £8.35 TENNIS

NUMBER

66m

The number of dollars (£40m) the bank, Comerica, will pay over 30 years to put its name on the Detroit Tigers' new baseball stadium.

FOOTBALL

Rea Star Belgrade's Yugoslav in-metional midfielder Perica Ogn-jenovic is set to move to Real Madrid, according to Spanish me-dia reports yesterday. Real want to sign the 21-year-old before the Span-ish winter transfer deadline expires

on 15 January, but with Red Star Insisting on a transfer fee of around £3.2m. the European champions may decide to walt until the end of the season, when Ognjenovic becomes a free agent and can move for nothing.

comes a free agent and can move for nothing.

Mario Zagallo, the Brazilian national team coach at this year's World Cup. has signed a six-month contract as the coach of Portuguesa, a club side based in São Paulo.

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP SUS-PENSIONS (From 23 Dec): R Di Matteo (cheisea) one match. (From 26 Dec): P Van Hooljdonk (Nottingham F) three matches: G Newtile (Man United) one match; S Osborna (Cheisea) one match; L Bohinsar (Derby) one match; B Carbone (Sreff Wed) one match; B Carbone (Stechburn) one match. (From 30 Dec): C Riggott (Derby) diree matches: D Peacock (Blackburn) one match. (From 30 Dec): C Riggott (Derby) diree matches: D Peacock (Blackburn) one match; D Webberalt (Leeds) one match; G Newfile (Man United) one match.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE SUSPENSIONS (From 25 Dec): M Lawrence (Mycombe) WORLD BOXING ASSOCIATION SUPER-FLYWEIGHT TITLE (Nagoya, Japan) [12-rd]: J Royas (Ven) bt S lida (Japan) pts.

one match; I. Peacock (Mansfield) one match; B. Garjile (Shrewsbury) one match. (From 26 Dec); R. Masuge (Pymouth) two matches; J. Chambes (West Brom) one match; S. Leikch (Swindon) three matches; J. Masuse (Solton) one match; S. Leikch (Swindon) three matches; J. Mallis (Bradford) one match; C. Perfulse (Crester-field) one match; C. Perfulse (Crester-field) one match; G. Batanader (Luton) one match; G. Batanader (Luton) one match; D. Batanader (Barnsley) one match; D. Eadle (Norwich) one match; G. Lawle (Millwall) one match; G. Dassus (Reading) three matches; G. Garbanader (Nacionales (From 25 Dec); P. Walsham (Frammere) one match; N. Campball (Scarborough) one match; D. Tlatže (Manchester C.) four matches; M. Monington (Rochdale) four matches; M. Monington (Rochdale) four match; Prom 30 Dec); t. Bieguekin (Fulham) one match; H. Aljofree (Bolton) one match; A. Siebton (Chester) one match; TURESDAY'S LATE RESULTS

ICE HOCKEY SEKONDA SUPERLEAGUE (Thesday): Newcastle Riverkings 1 Cardiff Devils 6. MML: Phoenix 6 Detroit 2, New York Islanders 3 St Louis 3 (07), Los Angeles 3 Presburgh 0. Vancouver 5 Calgary 3, Anaherm 1 Colonado

the company by mutual agreement. Gary Anderson takes over the po-sition with immediate effect. POOLS DIVIDENDS

TODAY'S

NOTHING AMISS WITH LE TISS P14 THE INCREDIBLE ALI EFFECT P17



England face confusing options

BY DEREK PRINGLE in Melbourne

THE MELBOURNE Cricket Ground on Boxing Day can be a daunting place for any visiting team let alone one still tasting the remnants of numb-ing defeat as England must be. Christmas may be the season of goodwill to all men, but in Australia that does not extend as far as the England cricket team, who go into this fourth Test as rank outsiders. If Christmas cannot come too soon for some, it certainly has for England who need nothing less than a win to stay in the

With morale already low after conceding a 2-0 deficit in the Test series a humiliating nine-wicket defeat, coming just before a watershed Test match, was less than ideal. Speaking on the subject for the first time, the captain, Alec Stewart, echoed the scathing views previously given by the team manager, Graham Gooch.

"It was probably our worst performance overseas since a certain Saturday in Sydney, eight years ago," the said. "I can accept that people can play tadly, tut I can't accept a poor approach.

"Playing for England, or anyone for that matter, you just don't go through the motions. We shall be sitting down and having a frank and open discussion about it before practice. After we've done that we'll look forward to the Test."

Whatever the soul searching achieves. Stewart is probably fortunate that six of the side likely to play on Saturday, were not involved in Hobart, Having half a team tarnished merely by association rather than deed will undoubtedly help speed the healing process.

That said. England will probably not name a team until Christmas Day. According to Alec Stewart the make-up of the side is likely to comprise of six tratsmen and five bowlers, the option of seven batters having "not really worked".

batsmen and five front-line bowlers was surely why Stewart donned the gloves in the first place. Whether it be down to Australia's all-round mastery Alec Stewart, the England captain and wicketkeeper, is likely to drop down the batting order to No 5 for the fourth Test against Australia, which starts on Boxing Day

sure until 11 men walk out in front of the 80,000-strong crowd that is expected on the first day.

Even now, the "sensible" option of Stewart dispensing with the gloves and opening -If it sounds during playing six rumoured in Hobart but initially rebuffed here - has not entirely been rejected. Mind you. if there is a one thing the selectors like even less than losing. it is admitting they are wrong or the self-inflicted doubt of and all signs are that Stewart their opponents, England's will keep the gloves, tut drop

confusion appears to have come down a place in the batting It is not an easy task and the are favourities to complete the highest echelons of fast bowl- than wickets taken (five). But

With Graeme Hick one of six centurions in the last match. the top six batsmen pick themselves. The bowting is less certain and unless Robert Croft has come back into the reckoning the three bowlers rested in Tasmania - Darren Gough, Alan Mulially and Dean Headley - are the only ones certain to play. Which leaves two to be picked from those that conceded 376 for 1 in 55.2 overs against an Australian XI.

cloud matters rather than elucidate them. Unless you forgive Alex Tudor, Peter Such, Dominic Cork and Angus Fraser for their lack of penetration and wasteful ways, the final two bowling places might

Santa's sack. Unless the pitch, in Stewart's words, is "something out of the ordinary", Tudor and Snch, both having performed well in which probably means he will

just as well be pulled from

When things become arbitrary, morale - and bow to lift it-becomes an overriding preoccupation. Fortunately not everyone will have been affected and if anyone can put some Christmas cheer into England's gloomy festive season it ought to be Gough.

In many ways Gough, with his good nature and bonhomie, is a natural Father Christmas. their single Test outings so far, never quite make it to the more catches dropped (six)

quite see Glenn McGrath getting along as well with the children as our Darren, who has already donned the white beard

and red suit for the kiddles of Hobart. There is a general consensus, from both camps, that Gough has been unlucky this series, having regularly beaten the bat and had several catches missed. Indeed, before the first innings in Adelaide he had had

still went begging. But is it simply luck, or does

there another three chances

Gough lack the guile to be truly great? Physically, he is less than ideal being just under six foot. The best Test batsmen tend to get out by edging fulllength balls to either the keeper or slips. For that reason the ball needs to carry through to them, preferably between chest and knee high

England's slips may have

been guilty of standing too deep on occasions but edges from Gough, a skiddy bowler, rarely carry comfortably and the ones. that have been dropped have tended to be those that have only just carried. Gough has a low arm and a high character Fast bowling generally mands that they are the old way around

Gough, as he has done throughout his career, his borne his misfortune lightly at least he did until he the culprit, dropping a lardy, easy catch at long leg in Bard Normally, his ebullience

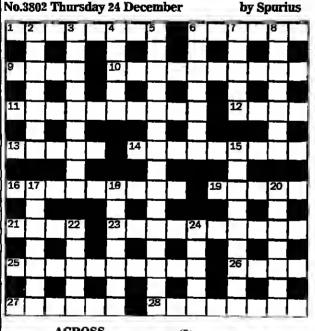
helped England ride dad that mistake, he has here noticeably less animated. No wonder the Aussies are cockhoop. If they can get to a hur acter as naturally upbeat discough, intimidating the will have been a doddle.

While England's has contributed heavily 11 Gough's relatively low tally wickets (10), the lack of run from his bat has been of his doing. Four years ago in Aus tralia, he slammed a half-century at Sydney. The now seems like a mirage and has failed to pass 20 in his

Apart from a lack of co. dence, his problem appears to be one of balance, the Yall shireman having problem shifting his weight on to either front foot or back. You can get away with being in limbo against Durham or Sussex, but not against McGrath or Stuart MacGill, at least not for long enough to make a significant

If six batsmen are to get enough runs for the bowlers to be able to apply real pressure on Australia, someone in the. bottom five will have to stay with one of them. If Gough wants more wickets, scoring \$ some runs may be as important as others taking their catches. Western Australian fast bowler. Matt Nicholson, into their squad for the fourth Test following the withdrawal of Jason Gillespie with a knee injury. Nicholson has enjoyed a resurgence this season after struggling last year with an illness which left him feeling perma-nently tired. He claimed 7 for 700 and scored an unbeaten halfcentury against England for his state in the drawn tour match at the WACA last month.

THE THURSDAY CROSSWORD



fit is false (8) Police involved in second series of exercises Content of programme chosen - repeat (4) Callow youth in bid to

join infantry (10) 11 Easily managed trailer, not very heavy (10)
12 Arrange for woman to leave hospital (4)
13 Nag, one taking part in fox-hunt (5) 14 Where one would expect to find his nibs? (3-6) 16 Leave after entering rowdy scene, making no

19 Note objection about

Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford

plant's store of reserves 5

Promissory note accept- 21 Thick slice of cake is left 7 ed by north London out- by sailor (4) by sailor (4)
23 Old means of persuading seamen to use hitches, initially (10)
25 Set out with ill-assorted carload of priests (10)
26 Press husband to make an end of the matter (4)
27 Woodcutter from Switzerland is found ly-

ing beside railway (6) 28 Soft furnishing (8) 2 You find it in the upper part of the wood (7) Orange river I'd crossed it forms part of the state border (3,6)



Attempt at concealment after spilling the salt (7) Weapon conveyed in sack (5) House army supremo in church - it's cold and dark (4-3) Boy receiving a punch staggering around plat-form (6,3) Free from restraint, pawnbroker with money gives away a couple of

crack of dawn? (7,8)

undred (7 18 Stronghold in which army's besieged by El Cid, maybe (?) Essayist takes an age penning document about queen (7) Bishop not so frequently having to pronounce benediction over (5) Power associated with benediction over (5) logarithm, frequently (5) 24 Fail to justify religious opinion, mostly (5) opinion, mostly (5)

Joni Newspapers (UK) Limited, I Caunda Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, and printed at Mirror

Platt moves for Sharpe FOOTBALL

DAVID PLATT is due to open talks today to make his first signing - Leeds United's out-offavour winger Lee Sharpe.

Sharpe has spent a month on the sidelines after being transfer-listed by manager David O'Leary, who made it clear the 27-year-old did not figure in his future plans. But Platt, who took over as Sampdoria's new coaching superviser last week, will look to take Sharpe on loan until the end of the season with a view

to a permanent deal. Blackburn are closing in on Ashley Ward Rovers have been given permssion by Barnsley to speak to the striker and the £4.5m deal - which will land Ward a £300,000 payment - should be completed by the weekend.

Blackburn want Ward eligible for the FA Cup tie with Charlton Athletic in the New Year and he would need to sign on Boxing

BY ALAN NIXON

Day in order to be registered in

Liverpool's manager, Gerard Houllier, was given a boost in his move for Milan's German goalkeeper Jens Lehmann last night when Borussia Dortmund said he was too expensive at £1.5m. Aston Villa, resigned to losing

Bosman ruling, have been alert-ed to the availability of Germany's second-choice keeper. Thai Football Association officials have denied that the FA paid part of the salary of Thailand's coach, Peter Withe, to

Mark Bosnich under the

2006 World Cup bid. "I confirm that the English FA have never requested any com-

bribe them to vote for England's

Woravi Makudi, secretary general of the FA of Thailand, said. Reports had suggested that the FA's generosity was an attempt to influence Woravi, Thailand's

Another Fifa official is thinking of asking North Korea to stage two matches in the 2002 World Cup. Chung Mong Jun, head of the South Korean foothall association and a Fifa vicepresident, said there were plans to field a joint North-South Korea

Fifa representative.

team in the tournament, which is being co-hosted with Japan. Arsenal's plans to sign the Nigerian international Nwankwo Kanu have had to be put on hold because the Internazionale striker, who was due to arrive on loan for the rest of the season with a view to a £4.5m transfer,

is to undergo cartilage surgery. England have moved up two places in the Fifa world rankings places below their end-of-year ranking for 1997. Scotland have slipped two places to 38th

Bruce Grobbelaar has parted company with Lincoln City after two appearances for the Second Division club.

The Zimbabwean international's Sincil Bank career lasted 12 days after signing on a non-contract basis from Ryman League Chesham United. He spent the days between his two games travelling to Zimbabwe for international duty, and the club needs more commitment. Grobbelaar is wanted by Zim-

coach to Clemens Westerhof. Newcastle United's Georgian midfielder Temur Ketsbaia has retired from international football. Ketsbaia said his decision was prompted by differences with the coaching staff.

tabwe to become assistant



Sharpe: Sampdoria target

Wolves have agreed terms with Havard Flo, the Norwegian striker who headed his country's goal against Scotland in the World Cup and is available for

£750,000 from Werder Bremen. West Bromwich Albion have moved closer to sharing the Hawthorns with Moseley rugby union club next season after a productive exploratory talks between senior officials.

Davis and Co fall short of clean break

SNOOKER'S OLD guard just clung on to power yesterday, ensuring that an uneasy peace at best will break out within the sport, even if there is an end to the current in-fighting.

Former world champions, Steve Davis and Dennis Taylor, and Jason Ferguson, who wished to overthrow the current chairman, Rex Williams, were elected on to the board of the governing body at the World Professional Billiards Association's annual meeting yesterday

but will be in a minority. The vote by the 77 eligible members in a Birmingham hotel also formally elected co- said: "I didn't want to be part of opted directors Ray Reardon a split board. I didn't think that ated by those with self-interests.

BY GUY HODGSON

and Jim McMahon which ensures Williams will have a fourthree advantage in the board room. The dissenters have gained influence but not power

After the five-hour meeting both sides called for a settlement of differences which centred on snooker's inability to secure sponsors even though the sport commands high television figures. Terry Griffiths, who withdrew his candidature midway through the afternoon,

was the best thing for the members or for me.

Taylor added: "We don't need all this haggling and fighting because it's not healthy... Now that Steve, Jason and myself are on the board we can take the game forward. Snooker's a great product. It appeals to all ages."

Williams, whose own position of chairman was not up for reelection but who could have been ousted if another rebel had been voted in, was also placatory. "Everybody should be pleased with the outcome. There will be no problems created by me but I don't know what problems might be cre-

I was disappointed Terry withdrew his name because he would have given us a better balanced board. Now we have got to try and get some unity into the game. There is no animosity between myself, Steve and Dennis."

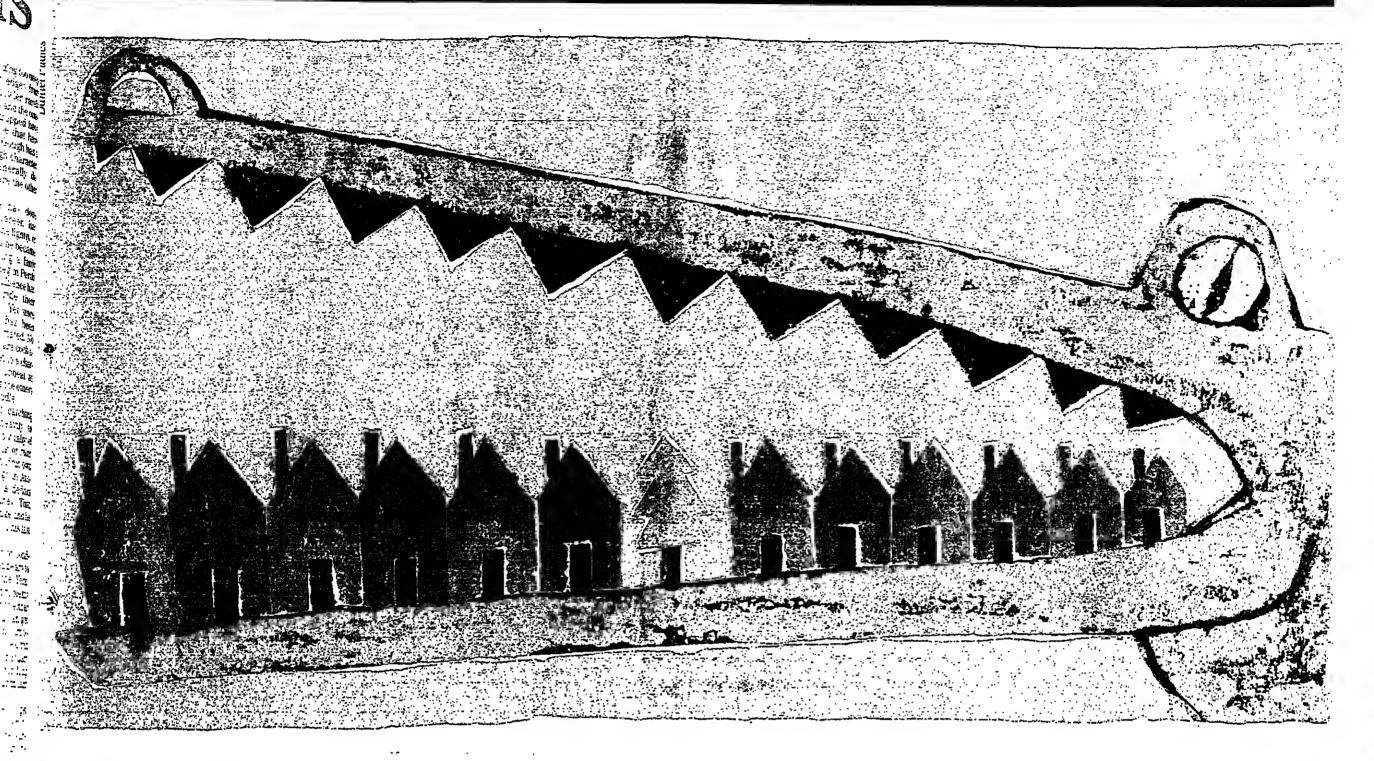
Snooker, politically never the most benign of environments, has been racked with division since Jim McKenzie, the chief executive, was removed from office a year ago. He is suing the WPBSA for breach of contract, a case that will be heard in the High Court on 11 January, but he is by no means the only casualty of the civil war that has erupted since. The tournament

director, Ann Yates, who had worked in the sport since 1976, and Bruce Beckett, bead of media relations, left the governing body during the summer after clashing with Williams while the sport's Independent on Sunday correspondent, Clive Everton, has had his life membership of the WPBSA revoked and been denied normal press facilities at tournaments. Further trouble could be ahead, too, because Sindhu Pulsirivong, president of the Thai Snooker and Bil liards Association, has threat ened to prevent tournaments. taking part in Thailand if

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[URSDAY REV]

ARTS • LISTINGS •



Gilstrap, the homesick explorer

the evidence of haboons, Gilstrap had noticed, because the noisy creatures loved squatting in the branches, cracking a tamarind seed, and a smile, with each hite of their doggy teeth. You could not camp within 50 feet of a tamarind. But Gilstrap was not dismayed. "There it is!" he said, with heery fatalism, and tugged his moustache. He

The Two-Toed Tumbo people were the object of this quest, yet as an explorer he knew that such a journey was a continuous series of startling confrontations of which the baboons chewing in the limbs of the tamarind were just one. This was the Zimbaba, the lower river.

It was not Mudford, the home he had left too long ago even to remember the names of its trees, nor any of the people there, except the ones who had tormented him as a youngster, and the woman who waited for him in vain. Her name was Elveera Howie. Mudford was the past and, like all such distant memories, it was unreal and a little absurd, a sort of toy-town he had ahandoned, when he was Freddie Gilstrap from Webster Street.

Gilstrap the explorer had a taste for hardships hut could not abide nuisances, which was why he afled Mudford and why he had stayed away. Elveera was just an encumbrance, because she would not leave the hideous town.

Christmas was coming. Good! He was where he wanted to be, on the other side of the earth. In Central Africa, beneath the tamarinds and winterthorns of the Zimbaha banks. Gilstrap knew that had he been anywhere else, he would be yearning to be back here on the Zimbaha.

Sometimes, trekking alone in the heat along the river bank he was able, in his stupor of satisfaction, to recover his dislike of Mudford. There was, first of all, Elveera Howie, supporting herself by giving music lessons in the parlour of her house near Craddock Bridge, adjacent to the Interstate; and the Interstate itself, looming over the town, illuminating Mudford with its glaring lights at night and, with that traffic, drowning the music of Elveera's strings. Mudford was never silent, nor ever dark.

The pillars of the Interstate attracted graffiti, and beneath the arches were strange encampments of drifters and drunks. Then there were Gilstrap's hatreds: the litter, the filthy black seats of a Mudford taxi and the meaningless smile of the driver. Some-

A SHORT STORY FOR CHRISTMAS

BY PAUL THEROUX

one at a soda fountain slurping a drink or loudly chewing ice. Circus animals, haseball hats on He toppled forward, used the last of his strength chewing ice. Circus animals, haseball hats on backwards, the exultant insincerity of The Mudford essenger. Dirty hands, cold eyes, hillboards, bad breath, most flags. The person who rested a damp drinking-glass on a book cover, and hus fumes, and the idiot laughter of someone watching TV. Mayor Mazzola, Dr Enid Hugo the dentist, Hump his neighbour's lab - just one of Brimble's slobbering dogs. Elveera's cat Morris, most children, and - in this season - everything to do with Christmas, from the Christmas carols monotonously repeated in elevators and the overstuffed Santa amhushing him from every Mudford street corner, to the topheavy Christmas trees on their wohlly stands.

Gilstrap craved new sights, and in Africa he was thrilled when he reflected, I have never been here before, and better, Nor seen anything like

Even better, Nor has anyone else.

He was altogether a satisfied man. He was more than fifty, but could pedal that many miles on his hike in half a day, and not only could do that number of push-ups as well hut often did. On any quest, he said, the principal thing was never to look back.

His hearers saw him down the Zimbaba from Chambo in dugouts - the river was down, the heavy rains were not due until mid-December - and just above Kawaba he paid off his bearers and sent them back, and struck out on his own, the low scrub smacking his puttees.

And while Gilstrap marched he heard a child's bratty voice call out, "Go away!"

"On the contrary." He spoke pompously, to make his point, yet was somewhat self-conscious at finding himself replying to a bird in a tree. It was, of course, a

Because, Gilstrap reflected, it was a land without Christmas trees, nor any suggestion of home; it was, in a word, not Mudford. He had spoken indignantly and it seemed significant that there had been no answer, so the bird had quite seen his point.

to zip the flapping door, and there he lay, under canvas, twitching like a monkey. He was very cold. He shivered. He grew warm. His brain ached, his skin was scorched, he panted, he slept, he saw doggy demons with chewed fur and red eyes; he saw cranky hirds on hlack trees with beaks like scissors; then he saw nothing, for he felt that his eyes were being

boiled in their sockets. When the fever finally passed, Gilstrap crept from his tent, weak and thirsty, and knelf at the river bank. He saw a troop of baboons all tangled in the tamarinds. The baboons joined him, scoop-splashing the water to their mouths as Gilstrap did - the Zimbaba was clean enough to drink

Ranged on the bank, the baboons regarded him with dripping faces, hut what struck Gilstrap most of all was the way the baboons separated into little families, mother and child and frowning father, just the way Mudford families picnicked at Hickey Park or rested by the banks of the Mystic River near Craddock Bridge, at Christmas. Now he remembered that fragment of Mudford and sighed.

Resuming his hike, he saw a crocodile on a sand bank with its mouth wide open, and a white-feathered egret approached it, and Gilstrap was put in mind of Dr Enid Hugo, the dentist, and her long legs and white smock. The egret did a most dentist-like thing, tilted her head and drilled expertly between the crocodile's teeth, foraging as she cleaned them. He remembered the garrulity of Dr Hugo, though perhaps her questions were no worse than

the insistent egret. A roly-poly hippo, not far away, raised itself be-fore Gilstrap and seemed to smile, and Gilstrap was put in mind of a well-padded Santa, shaking with laughter on a Mudford street corner. But the Santa was the more harmless of these huffoons. Even trotting husily along the banks, the hippos looked like shoppers and they munched in the

"Go away!" he heard, and it was repeated. He knew it was another Go-Away Bird, yet now One afternoon, he pitched his tent and, squatting the command made him pensive.

Gilstrap pushed on, picking the odd guava and watching the slow-footed progress of his dusty boots. to the doubtful encouragement of the Monotonous Lark and the screech of the Racquet-tail Roller in

their tumbling acrobatics. Towards nightfall, camped by a kopje, he felt a pair of eyes upon him - a warthog receding - indeed backing directly into his hole. Yet Gilstrap did not see the tusks and the hairy nostrils, the hristly face nor the oversized head, but the sweeter and sillier face of Hump, the lab, settling into his dog-bed with

the same tentative inquiry of his hindquarters. Not twenty feet away, another wart-hog was also reversing: this one, with a snout like a hood ornament, looked like an old Chevy, specifically that of Ed Brimble, Gilstrap's Mudford neighbour, as he fas-

tidiously backed into his garage.

Gilstrap woke and crawled from his tent to see Aunt Torn at hreakfast, nodding at her spinster sisters, Grace and Trudy. But no: though they had many Gilstrap features - solemn and long-faced and leggy - it was a trio of Marabou Storks, at work on the remnants of the food Gilstrap had unwisely left out last night. They had just about finished his provisions, and had punished the horde of guavas he

had gathered. Put distinctly in mind of Mudford at that juncture, he saw something Wagnerian in the Cape Buffaloes, which looked like an entire cast of Parsifal at the Mudford Opera. Reminiscing in this way Gilstrap hardly noticed the eland beneath their horns, so lyre-like you half expected the phantom hand of a lovely woman – Elveera's perhaps – to reach out and pluck them and fill the air with the

plangency of this chord. Yet there was no music here. There was all of Africa, and not the chirping of birds hut their sud-den utterances, the Go-Away Bird with its command, and even more orders from the Mourning Dove. which repeated, "Work harder, work harder!" and at noon, "No farther, no farther!" and at nightfall, "Drink lager, drink lager!"

In his already crapulous state, Gilstrap heard and obeyed and, listening for more, heard the Laughing Dove laughing and a Spotted hyena yakking like a boasting child. Stumbling in the darkness, he shone his torch and saw a porcupine like a potscrubber and a Night Ape lurking like Mayor Mazzola, and a large ripe artichoke. The artichoke made him hungry - and a bit homesick, too, for the last artichoke he had eaten at Elveera's in Mudford hut, before he could feast on this one, he saw it revealed as a pangolin.

Onward in the morning on more reluctant feet, he saw a squirrel and he was back in Hickey Park, hut it was just a hush squirrel, oor as glossy or as well-fed as the Mudford squirrels. He saw more families of Mudford picnickers, but they were troops of Chacma baboons. Nor was that creature Morris the cat, hut instead a frolicking, clawless ofter, drying itself on a rock; that coiled coach-whip an Egyptian cohra, that coat-rack on the pretty patterned carpet a Goliath heron standing in a backwater in a small sea of hyacinths.

"Go Away," cried the Go-Away Bird. He glanced up and saw a Fish Eagle and, for an instant, was in the Mudford Post Office, standing under the American Eagle, getting his mail, which at this season would have been a stack of Christ-

mas cards. Yet the Hooded Vulture was a hooded vulture, the tse-tse flies were tse-tse flies, the crocs crocs, the bats bats, the sunlight's shattering flash like the swipe of a golden sword. Gilstrap knew he ought to have been nearer to the object of his quest, and yet he seemed no nearer.

He turned inland, away from the river bank, in desperation and what he saw made him pine for Mudford: as far as he could see were Christmas trees. Pine trees here? Yes, the trees were gorgeous their green houghs beautifully decorated with hright trinkets. Gilstrap wept at their symmetry and their colour, and even at the way they so explicitly wobhled on their stands.

Through his tears of homesickness, how was Gilstrap to know that these were the Two-Toed Tumbo People in their ceremonial cloaks, which were cootrived from the feathers of the Green-Backed Heron and the Green Sandpiper, the Emerald Cuckoo and the Olive Bee-eater, and hung

with ornameots? "Go Away," cried the Go-Away Bird,

This time Gilstrap obliged, leaving his tins and his camp stool and his puttees and his tent, and fled upriver to Chambo, and caught the night bus, the first of many journeys that brought him back to Mudford and his love.



Leaders and comment

Obituaries & Gazette <u>Arts</u>

herbage like mothers at lunch.

Christmas Day TV Satellite & Radio Today's TV

FILMS OF 1998

Star of Bethlehem

Sir: There have been several astronomical explanations for the Star of Bethlehem. Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) suggested the star was a conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn in 7BC (Saturday Essay, 19 December). In the present century alternative suggestions have included a comet or a nova

None, however, fits the scant account of this event in the Gospel according to Matthew II: 2-12: ...the star which they [the Wise Men] saw in the East, went before them, till it came and stood where the child was..." A "star" travelling across the sky in this way and seemingly standing still over a particular terrestrial location cannot easily be reconciled with a nova, comet or planet.

There is a growing body of evidence to support a theory originally advocated by Victor Clube and Bill Napier that the history of our civilisation has been punctuated by episodes of cometary missile impacts. (See Clube and Napier, The Cosmic Winter, Blackwell Oxford 1990; F Hoyle and N C Wickramasinghe, Life on Mors: the case for n cosmic heritage, Clinical Press, Bristol, 1997). Such events would have played a crucial role in the evolution of myths as well as religious beliefs.

An impact event of this type involving the explosion in the atmosphere of a small cometary missile occurred in Tunguska, Siberia, this century. The Russian newspaper Sibir of 2 July 1908 reported, from a vantage point some distance from the epicentre of the explosion: "Early in the ninth hour of the morning of June 30 a very unusual natural phenomenon was observed here. In the village of Nizhne-Karelinsk ... the peasants saw a body shining very brightly. indeed too bright for the naked eye, with a blue-white light...'

This bears comparison with a medieval account of a "fireball event", cited by Victor Clube, Bill Napier and Mark Bailey: "A very terrifying apparition and sign of wonder has been seen in Bamberg and Liechtenfels. In the year 1560, on 28 December, [this apparition) was seen in the sky which first bad its beginning over Eberssberg in Franconia, and rose directly over Zeyl, and then from Zeyl [moved] towards the town call Elpmann ... and stopped still there for a long time." Receot archaeological evidence

from sites in Tunisia and Sweden points to an asteroid impact in the Middle East around 1000BC British Archaeological Reports S728, 1998). This would accord well with Old Testament accounts of the destruction of Jericho, which are stones raining down from the skies, and where Joshua is said to have bid the sun to stand still in the sky (Old Testament, Book of Joshua). What Joshua must have seen was clearly not the Sun standing still. but the distant glow of an immense fireball. One might wonder whether the account in Matthew of the Christmas Star is an event of a similar kind, although smaller in scale and viewed at a safe distance of perhans a bundred kilometres.

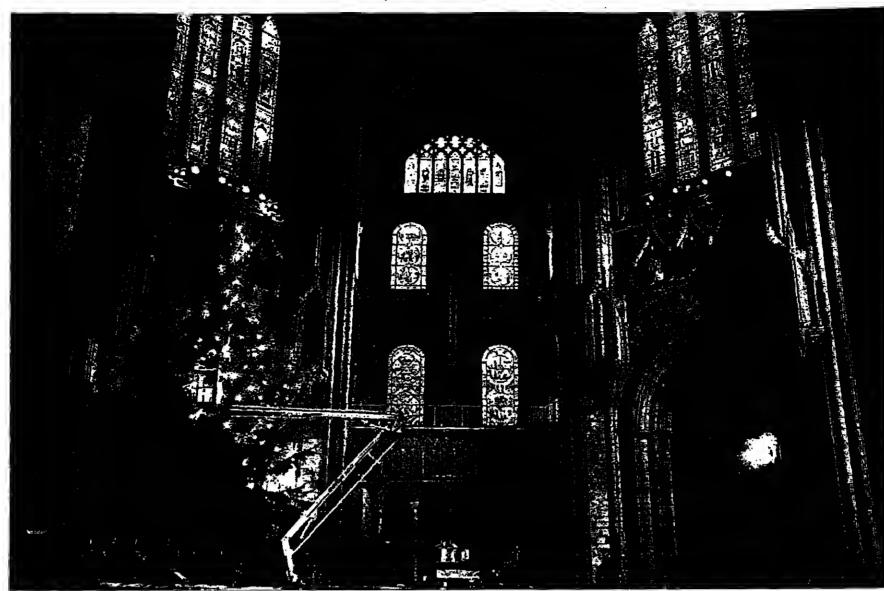
Several early Christian writers have referred to the extraordinary nature of the Star of Bethlebem. For example in the second century Ignatius of Antiochia in an Epistle to the Ephesians XIX wrote thus: "The star was so bright that its light was unspeakable and its newness caused astonishment ... a new star unlike any of the other well-known planetary bodies ... '

This might well bave been another example of a Tunguska type event-a fragment of a comet approaching the Earth, entering the atmosphere and eventually exploding in the skies over the Middle East some distance away from Bethlehem. A cometary missile impact, of the kind that has punctuated history since the end of the last ice Age, would then have

heralded the birth of Jesus Christ. On such a picture one would also expect a multitude of smaller meteoroids to follow the larger cometary missile. It is then easy to understand bow the resulting

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Dressing the Cathedral No 4: Arranging the lights on Ely cathedral's 42-foot tree

Brian Harris

spectacle of a great meteor shower came to be immortalised as a "host of angels". **Professor CHANDRA** WICKRAMASINGHE

Rattle fights on

Sir. In light of your report "Rattle to quit Labour's musical desert" (21 December), I wanted to put the record straight.

I do not feel that the UK is an artistic desert, but rather a parched garden in need of attention. It seems that the first drops of water are on their way. needed grant increases to some of our orchestras, and the setting up of the Youth Music Trust to start dealing with some of the problems of instrumental teaching provision.

We in the arts community are all a little punch-drunk after years of cuts and freezes, but I hope we are not so damaged that we cannot give credit where it is due. The Government has at least started to do something to repair the damages to the arts in the UK, and

we need to welcome that. There is still much to be done the latest figures show that over £60m has been lost from music education over the last seven years. I and my colleagues will continue to shout until our companies are bealthy once more, and until the grotesque inequalities of educational provision are tackled

But not all criticism implies opposition - let us encourage the Government to carry on rebuilding the arts, while constantly reminding them to get a move on, before it's too late! SIT SIMON RATTLE London, WC2

Sir: I was saddened to learn that Sir Simon Rattle may leave the

country. I, too, despair of the future of school music. In many primary schools, the whole of the morning sessions are now given over to Maths and English. So all the rest of the subjects - science, ITC. geography, history, music, art, PI, drama and RE-jostle for a precious place in the shorter afternoon sessions.

Last term, I conducted a straw

poll among 60 of my students training to be primary teachers. Only a bandful had been given an opportunity to observe or teach a music lesson on their school placement; the rest had found music elbowed out of the curriculum to almost vanishing point. One school's classroom music consisted of half an bour a term for each class.

Each day your Gazette lists over half of whom have attained distinction in those very curriculum areas which are now being marginalised: muslc, drama, sport, religion and art. What a chilling thought that, in 50 years' time, your birthday Gazette might be reduced to a dreary list of MPs, lexicographers and accountants. BARBARA POINTON

Thriplow, Cambridgeshire

Bishop vs BBC

Sir: John Walsh is

Sir: I find the recent letters from the Bishop of St Albans (21

December) quite astounding. He seems unable to accept that Christianity represents only a minority of people in this country and imagines that the BBC's

unimaginative in his response

to Christmas day ("Fairy lights

December). He could tell his

children a ghost story or sing

The Village Pump or take them

round the garden looking at the

sleeping plants. Christmas for

children can be a magical time.

The preceding three months

hear most adults complaining

about Mammon and the truth of

Christmas being hidden behind

commercialism. I don't see why

we can't all take responsibility

for our own Christmas. Decide

and surgical strikes", 21

unwillingness to give more time to the religious significance of Christmas is due to fear Fear, not only about the ratings war, but also of religious coocepts of death, eternity, mercy or buman meaning.

How much television does he watch? These topics are dealt with frequently, although not necessarily from the Christian point of view.

Does the bishop believe that Muslims, Jews and other religious leaders would be justified in complaining when their views are not aired as appropriately as they consider fit? And what about

It seems to me that it is the bishop who is bewildered about his and Christianity's purpose, not the BBC about its purpose. ALAN GOLDING Brookmans Park, Hertfordshire

Sir: The complaint that the BBC gives inadequate coverage of Christianity got an inadequate reply from the head of BBC Religion (Right of Reply, 18 December). The BBC does indeed give inadequate coverage not only of Christianity but of all religion, despite the large number of radio and television programmes on the subject, because they hardly attempt more than a superficial expression or examination of any

religious doctrines or practices.

IN BRIEF

Celebrate the solstice, celebrate

your family, or celebrate Christ,

Sir: You readers may like to be

warned. Recently we planned

Blackfriars, a straight enough

to take the Thameslink train

direct journey of just under

from Flitwick to London

how you could enjoy the

CLARE HARDING

Stansted Esser

enforced festive season and make it meaningful for you.

However, Christians would get more sympathy from non-Christians if they showed more awareness of the equally inadequate coverage of all such doctrines and practices. Moreover, considering that only one tenth of the population are observant members of any religious denomination, the BBC also gives

inadequate coverage of nonreligious beliefs and behaviours. The best solution would be the abolition of the institution called "BBC Religion" and the establishment of a new department devoted to proper coverage of all serious metaphysical and moral credal and multi-cultural society. This could produce programmes

enthusiastically expressing the celebration of major religious festivals. Christian and non-Christian, but also programmes critically examining the background to such events, without the constant bias towards the mainstream of the Christian tradition.

NICOLAS WALTER Rationalist Press Association London N1

Grow old gratefully

Sir: You carry yet another article on the negative aspects of ageing ("And now I am old", 22 December). This is certainly more than one too many.

one hour. We had not got the Thameslink timetable to hand so we tried Railtrack on the web. The result was a choice of journey times ranging from just over two hours to threeand-a-quarter hours, but you do take in Bedford (north of Flitwick), London St Pancreas, London Bridge, London Cannon Street and, eventually, London Blackfriars; four changes, three trains and two tube journeys later. ARTHUR BOURNE FIONA BOURNE Flitwick, Bedfordshire

Certainly poverty and ill health prevent many people from enjoying their later life, but many retired people enjoy the freedom from the responsibilities of work and family. Even some with potentially serious illnesses can enjoy themselves as so many treatments are available to keep illness under control.

We have to be a little bit old to become grandparents and enjoy the many new adventures that this brings us. It also gives us an element of immortality to see certain aspects of our own personality pass to future generations.

grandparent gave my greatgrandmother, my grandmother and my mother and father a great deal of pleasure; it is something which I can look forward to with optimism. MARGARET BEITH Guilden Sutton,

Debt to De Freitas

Sir: I was one of the greatest admirers of Helen de Freitas, who was a most remarkable and talented lady. She demonstrated in all that she did a most charming manner and a formidable intelligence. I hope therefore that you will allow me to correct one thing in your excellent obituary by Leonard Miall (17 December).

Lady de Freitas did not at any time, organise meetings to belp elect our present Speaker, the Rt Hon Betty Boothroyd MP, even though they were great friends. What she did do, at a most important time in the Labour Party, was to host meetings of **National Executive Committee** members to work on various problems we were experiencing.

I hope you will allow me to put on record what an enormous debt we all owe to her. GWYNETH DUNWOODY MP (Crewe and Nantwich, Lab) House of Commons London SW1

Our brutal friends

Sir. As the dust of the last week's futile bombing raids on Iraqi towns: and bases settles and we move into the hopefully reflective period of Christmas and year end, it might be an appropriate moment to ponder on the Government's dealing with Iraq and its next-door neighbour, Iran.

All year there has been the spectacle of our Foreign Office sidling up to the murderous mullahs (who are suddenly banding out oil contracts), lauding by turn the new "liberalism" perceived to be prevailing under President Khatami and his "rule of law". Salman Rushdie is publicly mollified (and privately gagged) and there is a scramble to comply with Tehran's orders to "close down" all groups working from this country purported to be in opposition to the Iranian government (first in line being the UK-registered charity Iran Aid; after 15 years of rescuing children orphaned by the regime its funding has been cut off).

On the other hand Saddam Hussein continues to be presented as number one Bogeyman, the sledgehammer comes out again to crush him and his people and Iraqi opposition groups are invited to tea in Whitehall

Make no mistake, the regimes m question are still equally horrible, so we could ask, which of the two diametrically-opposed policies is the "ethical" one - or are they both? BELINDA MCKENZIE Friend of Iran Aid London N6

Sir. The Prime Minister's behaviour in the bombing of Iraq reminds me of the one character that is more despicable than a bully. That is the person who tags along and joins in with the bullying -the person who takes no risk because the bully will be there to hide behind in the unlikely event of the victim turning on them, MICHAEL COYLE London N21

Modern desires

Sir: Sam Arnold-Forster (letter, 10 December) cites Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - "everyone has the right to work" - in criticising the free market and increasing unemployment.

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This is to confuse two completely different concepts: the : right to work and the right to a job. The former is conferred by the UDHR, the latter is an excuse for disastrous centrally-controlled

In any event, it is patently not true that "what most people want is a bumble job and the ability to people want a great deal more than that. If most people genuinely had such bumble desires then the free

market could and would provide it. People actually want the fastest car, the newest trainers and the

most fashionable clothes. The free market is a tool, not an. end in itself. If it results in a society which is unfair, harsh, greedy auth selfish then it is merely reflecting the attitudes of the members of that society.

DANIEL BROMILOW London NW3

Christmas jeer

Sir. Given that the function of the Paymaster General is to "provide a banking and pensions service for government departments and other public bodies", perhaps Geoffrey Robinson should be congratulated for providing a £370,000 loan to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. In addition to showing an unquestionable level of duty, he has a praiseworthy achievement to his credit in the resignation of Mr Mandelson TIM CROSSLAND

Romsey, Hampshire

Sir: Two ministers resign in one day - there is a Santa Claus after TONYFLANAGHAN

Traditional festive fun to make the family crack(er) up

IT HAS been my experience in recent years that Christmas crackers are not what they used to be. In my youth we used to get really good things in crackers - not just hats, but also good toys such as metal

puzzles, indoor fireworks, and so on. The only good thing I have got out of a cracker recently was a key ring with one of those black bulbs attached which, when you press it, lights up and unlocks your car from a distance, and sets off other people's car alarms. What was nice about this was that, being a cracker present, it only lit up - it didn't unlock anything - so it gives my keys a plutocratic look without committing me to anything.

(Indeed, even 12 months later the red light is still working, so I have occasionally been able to use it as an emergency torch to find very small things such as the

ignition on the car...) But one thing that has never changed since my youth is the quality of the jokes in crackers. They were bad then, and they are had now. In fact, I suspect they are still the same jokes, the same schoolboy puns such as "What did the carpet say to the desk? "I can

see your drawers!' It has occurred to me that in this last issue before Christmas Day I might be doing a public service by providing some new cracker jokes, so over the weekend I programmed the mighty Independent computer to do some updated Christmas cracker jokes.

I fed into it the basic history of British jokes, a few hundred old matchboxes and a simple rundown of the last year's news, and asked it to come up with some new okes which you, the readers, could easily cut out and insert into the end of your Christmas crackers for the delectation of all the family. Here is what it provided. I think you will agree that the quality maintains all the awfulness of yesteryear.

Q. Why should Peter Mandelson always be accompanied? A. Because he should never be left alone (a loan).

Q. What is the difference between denationalisation and Tariq Ali? A. One is privatisation and the other is Private Eye's Asian.

Q. What do you call Richard Bran-



MILES KINGTON

The jokes in crackers were bad then and are bad now - I suspect they are still the same jokes

son spending Christmas Day over Chinese air space? A. Virgin on the ridiculous!

Q. Why is the station at Southendon-Sea like the House of Lords? A. Because it is the end of the line for the piers (peers).

Q. Why is the abdication of the Queen like a beart attack? A. Because they are both a shock to the constitution.

Q. What is the motto of the Royal Family? A. Never say Di.

Q. Why is Queen Elizabeth II like lavatory?

as possible.

someone sitting reading in the A. Because they are both determined to stay on the throne as long As the computer seemed to be building up something of a fixation with the Royal Family here, I had to instruct it to keep off Buckingham Palace, and move off in a different direction

Q. Why, at the Rio ecological summit, did President Clinton refuse to cut down on nocturnal emissions? A. (Censored.)

Q. Why is Luciano Pavarotti like the Millennium Dome?

A. They both occupy an immense area (aria).

Q. What does General Pinochet want for Christmas? A. That it should be Chile for the time of year.

Q. What do the Foreign Secretary's private detective and the Chancellor's private detective do on the beach during their summer bolidays?

A. They stand around in the baking sunshine and watch Robin Cook and Gordon Brown!

Q. What do Beijing and voyeurism have in common? A. They both used to be called Peking (peeking).

Q. How do you get rid of the boss of Harrods?

A. You tell him: "You're Fayed!" Let me know how the jokes went? down with the family. Fil pass it on to the computer

Hard lessons to be learned from a very public downfall

THE SWIFT offer, and prompt acceptance, of Peter Mandelson's resignation at least shows that New Labour can act decisively. That will probably seem little comfort to ministers. This is the greatest blow that the Government has suffered since it came to power. Losing the very architect of New Labour over such a stupid and sloppy mistake, the destruction of one of the Prime Minister's closest allies is nothing short of a disaster for Mr Blair's "project".

This highlights the Prime Minister's failure to act decisively earlier in the year, and sack the Paymaster General, Geoffrey Robinson, Perhaps if he bad done, Mr Mandelson would have realised the implications of his embarrassing "loan" earlier, with less pain all round.

We must hope that the Prime Minister has learnt his lesson: he must act quickly whenever a colleague is left twisting in the wind. crippled by allegation after allegation. John Major paid a high price for failing to do so, and Mr Blair must avoid the same fate.

As for Mr Mandelson, at least the speed of his departure does him some credit. He knows how important it is that the public have confidence in their elected representatives. They must he "whiter than white", in the Prime Minister's own words, to ensure that politics and politicians do not fall even further in public esteem.

In the absence of further allegations, it seems that Mr Mandelson's offence was relatively benign: not to register the money he received from Mr Robinson, and not to tell his Permanent Secretary that the debt prevented him from overseeing investigations into his benefactor. The former Trade Secretary made a frank confession of those mistakes in his resignation letter yesterday.

There is as yet no question that any influence was in fact bought, or any specific decision perverted, by the relationship. All the same, it was unhealthy and improper for a prospective minister to allow himself to become indehted to a colleague, and a rich and powerful husinessman. The public, tired of "sleaze", demand nothing less than the highest standards. Politicians must be open, whether or not they think they have done anything technically wrong. The transparency rules that Tory scandals prompted are beginning to enforce this, and are having the desired effect of forcing more disclosure. The days when politicians could disregard public opinion, or rely on journalists to cover up for them, are long gone.

Mr Blair must now hope that the Christmas holidays will act as a fire-break against this scandal. Perhaps the holiday spirit will calm feelings and encourage forgiveness. But this would be a pity if it were to weaken the impact of the last lesson that New Labour must learn: that cosyas its opportunities.



Peace on earth has made real advances

THE COMING of Christmas Eve invites us to embrace peace on earth, and goodwill to men - except that at the moment there seems to be very little of either. Glee has met Peter Mandelson's humiliation in some quarters. Bombs have been falling in the Gulf. Political rivalries have boiled over into divisive hatred in Washington's impeachment debate. In China, a promised political thaw has frozen over again. Russia is still mired in chaotic economic decline and its very own crony version of democracy.

Even so, we should not despair. There is much to celebrate, and many achievements to praise. The birth of Christ, and the worship it inspires, represent nothing if ing up to the rich and powerful has its dangers, as well not the triumph of buman hope and creativity, and it is testing was followed by tentative diplomatic contact. For appropriate that on the eve of celebrating His hirth, we these not-so-small mercies, we should be grateful.

should celebrate that creativity and bope all around us. Peace on earth has made advances. Northern Ireland's parties defied pessimists last week by reaching agreement on the composition of the Province's new government. The

first guns to be handed in during the present troubles have

emerged from the Loyalist Volunteer Force. The fall of Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel holds out the hope of progress in the Middle East. Most of the year has been spent in a depressing morass of broken promises; at least it is ending with the possibility that a real leader, courageous rather than just shallow and televisual, will

emerge to compromise with Israel's Arah neighbours. Some crises did not materialise. Kosovo's civil war has simmered, but not exploded. Nato action, though not going as far as it should have done, was prompt and strong enough to deter the Serb aggression so conspicuous and unopposed in Bosnia. Pakistan's and India's nuclear

Christian faith and common bumanity bold that all men and women are of equal worth. Poverty prevents the realisation of this ideal; it has made unwelcome advances this year in Asia, in the financial crisis still reverberating around that region. But the Asian flu has not carried across all economies. The world financial system has not collapsed. and the rich world will at least get chances in the near future to relieve poverty, rather than sink into depression.

If all people are equal, as Jesus preached, then they should also be equally responsible for their actions. The world has made progress towards this end, too, establishing a global criminal court. General Pinochet's detention is another advance. Even if he now escapes hack to Chile, he will at least have been made aware of the pain caused by his actions.

The world is not perfect. Hope and inspiration do not shine into every dark corner. But they are there, and they are growing. If the message of Christmas means anything. it is this: never despair.

The most illustrious political suicide since Parkinson – but why?

PETER MANDELSON'S is the most profession. We are, as a breed, genillustrious political suicide since the resignation of Cecil Parkinson back in ing adrenalises a newsroom like a the early Thatcher era. And the most significant. The demise of David Mellor in John Major's day was bad news for the Tory back-to-basics campaign, but Mellor himself was merely an effective (if gobby) minister doing a pretty good job over at Heritage. He was not the embodiment of the new Conservative political idea, nor was he the close confidente of the Prime Min-Bill without Hillary. Geoffrey

amins jeer

ister. But Tony without Peter is more Robinson's departure yesterday will be infinitely easier to cope with. Yet it is still not clear to me what

Mandelson has done that renders him unfit to serve in government. Indeed, had he resigned only a day later he would (among other things) bave given me just enough time to advise readers that I thought he shouldn't and wouldn't. That article would have hung round my neck as permanent testimony to my fallibility, and I have only just been spared from writing it.

But my bemusement, to some extent, remains. As a proposition, I believe that the two circumstances under which ministers should disbowel themselves are a) if they do something badly wrong, and h) - unfashionable this one - if they're bad at their jobs. Taking the latter one first, the consensus seems to be that Peter Mandelaon was set to be a good (possihly very good) Trade Secretary; business actively approved of him and the trade unions respected him.

This is not a proposition that finds much support among the journalistic resignation. But I doubt it. I do not

erally in favour of resignations, Nothnews flash announcing the unexpected departure of someone powerful: profiles are ordered up, cartoons are commissioned, the "events leading up to ... " are chronicled with dates and times. And, of course, the heroic role played by "The Daily X" and "The Sunday Y" in uncovering wbat previously was hidden, is recalled in positively Homeric language.

And one resignation whets the appetite for another. There is, therefore, very good reason why a government should attempt to apply the Aaronovitch rules to calls for ministerial selfslaughter. Why. indeed. Geoffrey Robinson has been allowed to hold on until now, despite the periodic and frequent appearance of stories alleging minor past misdemeanours. Blair has, since becoming Prime Minister, been determined not to give the press what they want, not to drop body parts

into the piranha tank. So why, then, has Mandelson gone now and so suddenly? Jack Cunningham, the Government's sleek enforcer, was yesterday at pains to stress that his ex-colleague had committed no sin, save error. How can the oh-so-tough Blair administration allow one of its two or three most valuable ministers to be pushed out of office merely for exhibiting "poor judgement"?

One explanation may, of course, be that there is - in there somewhere a dark little secret waiting to come out. whose disclosure is pre-empted by the



DAVID **AARONOVITCH**

It is still not clear to me what Mandelson has done that renders him unfit to serve in government

think that Peter Mandelson is in any way corrupt, though I admit that I've known the man for 22 years, and therefore would probably be the last

This being the case. Mr Mandelson's resignation acquires a slightly noble aspect. He could maybe have toughed it out a bit longer, but his ment was that such obstinacy would have done his PM and "the project" a vast amount of damage. In front of his eyes must have swum the terrifying image of Mellor Reduced, a private affair that was to become a soup of football shirts, sucked toes and family snapshots, and culminated in the eventual pretext of the undeclared holiday taken at the villa of Ms Mona Bauwens.

We all bave a Mona Bauwens somewhere, if we are investigated with suf-

the United States, with its unashamed big-husiness bankrolling of senators and congressmen, still rejected a series of presidential nominees for high office because they had failed properly to declare their nannies' incomes to the tax authorities.

So we're down to the fact that, as Mandelson knew, the bouse business just looked bad. The scale of the loan was too large for it to be dismissed as a simple - and repayable - act of kindness (though the argument that it would suffice to buy 20 houses in Hartlepool is not convincing. Frankly, most things will). People would be likely to ask what the lender wanted out of such a large advance.

It may have been for this very reason that Peter did not tell Tony about the arrangement. He knew that it was not a corrupt deal, and that be had shown Mr Robinson no favours when counselling the PM about what to do with the Paymaster General. But he also must have realised, if he thought about it for five seconds, that this is not what others would believe. Yesterday's letter of resignation contains this passage: "We came to power promising to uphold the highest possible standards in public life. We have not just to do so but we must be seen to do so." That is not, presumably, a conclusion that Mr Mandelson first reached in the long watches of

Tuesday night. In fact, he now acknowledges not only that he should have told the PM and his own Permanent Secretary of his arrangements, but that the original loan was itself a mistake. This ad-

ficient rigour. The political system in mission, and his prompt resignation. should separate him from the desperate, last-ditch denials of the last Conservative government. Peter Lilley's denunciation of Mandelson's "hanging on to office" was, for those with memories, one of the two comic highlights of the day. (The other was the greeting of the news in Mr Manson's constituency with the words.

"this is a dark day for Hartlepool".)

That, however, is not the end of the story. There is a very hig lesson here for New Labour, and it is one that they should learn from their friends before their enemies teach it to them in a much more unpalatable way. It is one thing to lose the ancient contempt and hatred felt by the left for wealth creators and the rich. It is quite another to adopt an unthinking admiration for the ways of the wealthy. Tax avoidance. though legal, is not admirable. The rich may be genuinely charitable, but they also use their wealth to purchase influence, much as I use working for The Independent as a convenient threat against tardy officials and inefficient companies. The endowed hardly know themselves that this is what they are about.

In other words, you can be wrong without doing wrong. That sense, not fear of the press, should inform the actions of ministers. Like Cecil Parkinson, Peter Mandelson will be back, for he has done the honourable thing. But the health of the Government (a government that this country still wants to see succeed) depends on maintaining a higher degree of bumility than some of its members have shown. They surely know this now.

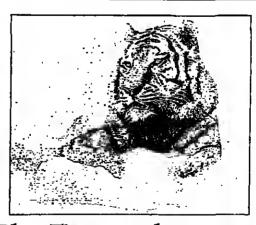
QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I do not believe that I have done anything improper. But I should not have entered into the arrangement." Peter Mandelson MP

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Courage is the price that Life exacts for granting peace." Amelia Earhart. oviation pioneer

THIS WEEKIN THEINDEPENDENT **ON SUNDAY**



Blue Tigers: a short story by Jorge Luis Borges. Published in Britain for the first time

Labour: it can only get worse, by Siôn Simon



Love life, money, work: your year ahead with the stars

THE TRIALS can only strengthen those who view the mainland warily, and underline the importance of maintaining the Hong Kong system with its freedoms that have so clearly been put off-limits on the mainland. Internationally, the sentences have embarrassed those Western leaders who hav been keenest on expand-and deepening relations

with China. The extremely

narrow view of national secur-

ity reflected in these sentences

will not serve anybody's interests, including those of the central government South China Morning Post

THE SEVERE punishment of prominent dissident Xu Wenli will incur a cost. The trial has aroused international attenbon because we not only care about the fate of the dissidents, we also care whether Peking can fulfil the promise of the UN human rights treaties. Now the dissidents are in jail and **MONITOR**

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD The Chinese press considers the recent jailing of two dissidents

Peking has failed to fulfil the CHINA HAS tried hard to build promise. The new open and en- a more open-minded image, lightened image she has just built up will be affected. In the long term, this is a high cost.

shown in its signing of a human rights treaty. Though mainland leaders today hold a more open attitude towards dissi-

their authority being challenged. In balancing the conservative force inside the Communist Party, Jiang Zemin has to be careful in order to avoid chaos. We believe the mainland will be able to catch up with Taiwan's democratic development and enhance prospects for unification if Peking can have a more open attitude towards the dissidents. Sing Tao, China

dents, they would choose to

send them to jail in the case of

duct co-operation with other countries to push forward the healthy development of universal human rights. Those who say that China's reform and opening-up policy will be "reversed" and accuse China of "retrogression in political reform", based on their view of the case of Xu Wenli and a few others, are ignorant of China's buman rights situation.

CHINA WILL, as always, im-

prove human rights and con-

OF REPLY

CHRIS TIBBITS



The managing director of Virgin Trains replies to our criticisms of their service.

YOUR PIECE, "Virgin's 148 days of no rail service" I feel gives a misleading review of void days.

A void day is when operators feel they are not providing an effective service to their passengers, and means that season ticket holders will automalically he given one day's extension to their season ticket.

An example of this includes 27 October this vear when severe infrastructure problems at Rugby and Camden, combined with the failure of another operator's service and severe weather conditions in the North-west resulted in very few Virgin trains being on time.

It should be noted that all these events are beyond our control. However, we at Virgin Trains take responsibility for our passengers and provide compensation and most of the cost of extending season

Until the introduction of our new Passengers Charter on 6 December the only mechanism open to Virgin Trains for making recompense to season ticket holders for poor service was to declare a void day.

To look after its customers, Virgin Trains has given a liberal interpretation of the application of this method which is agreed with the Office of the Rail Franchise Operator (Opraf) and operated previously under British Rail.

Recompense to other customers is made when individual applications are submitted as a result of disrupted service.

The headline in The Independent was particularly misleading. The total is not as illustrated, where they add the results of two separate franchises together, and count the same delay several times.

This situation arises as figures are published separately for void days on each of the three West Coast mainline routes. We do know that our performance could be better

We are working with Railtrack to ensure a better service both in the near future and after our major investment in new track. signalling and trains.

What's the point if you do this to Muslims?

LAST SUNDAY, at noon, a Home Office official phoned asking if I could attend a meeting with ministers to talk about the bombings on Iraq and British race relations. A handful of Muslims had been invited. Having watched House of Cards, I assumed that this was one of those invitations that required total discretion, and that I must have become a somebody. At 4pm, a journalist called to ask whether I would be going. Another called minutes later (he wanted to know whether Jack Straw thought I was a member of some terrorist organisation). And then someone from The Independent called, by which time I felt that there was no sense in playing secrets any more. I explained that I would not attend the meeting because I was too upset to talk, and that my strong feelings of despair and rage would not help race relations in the meeting-room, let alone the country.

It was not a gesture, not a boycott. I believe Straw is committed to racial equality and I know Mike



ALIBHAI-BROWN

How will 13 million European Muslims cope with the ruthless policies of Western governments?

O'Brien does criticise the popular press and "star" columnists such as Richard Littlejohn who regularly and with pleasure demonise all Muslims, especially when the West is bombing their brethren abroad. But I was not in the mood to comfort the hosts of the recent fireworks

party, about which I was not asked, when, (regrettably, I am sure) some of our houses had to be burnt down. These are probably the sentiments of all Muslims living in the West today. Even a Muslim like me -Westernised, defective, full of sin, a vocal critic of much that is wrong in our communities and Islamic countries - cannot and will not support the recent actions against the poor,

wretched people of Iraq.
As Robert Fisk wrote in this paper, the attacks represented "the final bankruptcy of Western policy" towards that once thriving country. One of the birthplaces of human civilisation, Iraq is now a place where researchers find that the children have lost their expectations of growing up.

I am affronted by the rhetoric of

the Government, and told Derek Fatchett this on the PM programme on Radio 4. He fed me more selfserving platitudes in response. There was no meeting of words.

But this is not only about Iraq. It about how we, the 13 million

European Musiims, are going to cope with the xenophobic, ruthless and thoughtless policies and actions of Western governments when they are dealing with Muslim countries. They do this without any consultation with us and without any understanding of how their own people (for that, whether they like it or not, is what we are) are likely to react.

Let us imagine the unimaginable for a moment. Suppose that the Israeli government got so outlandish, even by the generous standards which apply to it, that military action by the Western allies became necessary. Would this step be taken without long conversations into the night with prominent Jews? We know that the Irish presence in the United States has exerted enormous influence, for worse once and better now, on American politicians and the US government itself.

There is much talk in our country about the benefits of diversity. But as the late Barry Troyna, the leading academic of multi-culturalism, wrote, diversity is not only about "saris, samosas and steel bands". Nor is it just about getting fat import orders from India or parading a black mayor through the streets of London. If politicians don't realise that we have a role to play in the foreign policies of this, our nation, they have not understood the changes in this country since 1948. How well can they then be expected to run a mature, complex,

multi-ethnic democracy? New Labour is beginning to stir on this. The Foreign Office has set up a panel of advisers which include people such as Zeinab Badawi and Wahid Ali. But there is still too much ignorance and arrogance in the corridors of power. What a waste of all our Muslim academics who see themselves as Muslims of the West, not of the East.

We British Muslims feel guilty about Iraq, but we also feel powerless. Since Bosnia and Kosovo, when our people (which is increasingly how we regard persecuted Muslims around the world, in spite of our differences) had to die because it was just too difficult to stop these things, our innermost fears are gathered around the spectre of a growing confrontation between Islam and the West.

Imagine then, our task as parents and educators, of persuading the brightest among our young that we must remain part of the democratic process; that there is no sense in being so angry that we make it asier for those who hate us to harm us; that separatist politics will do us no good. Young Muslim chemistry graduates are not building bombs in garages in Neasden or sending out application forms to Bin Laden, but they are increasingly questioning the wisdom of integration.

Another meeting which I did not attend this week was one organised by some Muslim students who want to create a structure which "has nothing to do with the lies about democracy and this anti-Muslim state". This should worry the Prime Minister, and if he wishes to converse I am available, now that I have stopped crying, any time, any place.

The truths that no Christmas card company would dare touch

"SILENT NIGHT" is one of the most atmospheric of carols. In spite of heing synthesised and piped to death around shopping malls, it still has the power to send a tingle up the spine when heard in the candlelit stillness of a midnight service.

Tonight, streams of people will make their way from pub to church, complementing one Christmas spirit with another, for a service that is rapidly becoming more popular than Christmas Day.

Yet, for many, going through the doors of a church is like entering another world. The carols and the readings take you back in time. But they tell a story that has timeless themes. Mary, an unmarried pregnant teenager, faces a hleak future. Joseph rescues her by means of a hasty marriage. The baby is born in difficult circumstances, which are made worse hy the murdering of hundreds of local children. The famseek asylum elsewhere. The fact that this child turns out to be the Son of God does not immunise him or them from the dangers of life.

A pregnant teenager, ahused children, a family of asylum-seekers these are the characters of the ancient carols. But I doubt that they would ever get through the marketing department of a Christmas card company. Not even charities that espouse these causes would dare risk their lucrative sales by using such cruel images. But that's the story of Christmas. To celebrate the hirth of Jesus with merry cards is as wide of the mark as remembering the massacre of Dunhlane with a celebrity party captured in a photoshoot by a glossy magazine.

It's the cruelty that makes the story so real and modern. Cynics have always cast doubt on the historical reliability of the Nativity stories. But the fantasy belongs to the commercial hype, not to the original story. Even the episode of angels visiting the shepherds has a ring of truth about it. In the first century



THE BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL

A pregnant teenager and a family of asylum-seekers are the characters of the carols

shepherds were notorious for fiddling the books - selling a few of their boss's sheep and blaming the wolves of the night. So bad was their reputily is forced to flee the country and ation that they weren't allowed to give evideoce in a court of law. Why would Luke, so keen to get his gospel accepted by scentics, make up such a line if it didn't have its root in fact? In today's world it would be like angels making the announcement to a convention of used-car salesmen. Shepherds had the same problem. In fact, God sending his messengers to such a hunch of outsiders and social outcasts was exactly the message he wanted to get over to the world. There's nobody beyond the pale. Shepherds, usedcar salesmen, pregnant teenagers, the abused and the abuser, asylum seekers, all lie within the circumference of his love.

This is disconcerting for us who refer to put people into boxes. We like to give everybody a category. Then you're either in or out. Social exclusion is not a new phenomenon. All the signs of the first Christmas are that God commits himself to a grand plan of social inclusion.

A pregnant teenager? In. A distrusted shepherd? In. An anxious asylum seeker? In. Even the dis-

tinguished strangers from the East come bringing a message of inclusiveness along with their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They are the first to worship Jesus, Foreigners and Orientals are in the vanguard to acknowledge the worth of this Jewish child. It is significant that this episode is recorded exclusively by Matthew. He is at pains to point out at every turn that Jesus is the fulfilment of all the Jewish prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. Matthew wanted to convince his own that Jesus was the Messiah and seems to shoot himself in the foot by relating that the orimary witnesses to his birth were not kosher Jews hut Orientals.

Again, it's difficult to know why this was put in if it did not happen, for it added nothing to Matthew's case. Yet even though it may have been difficult for his readers to accept, this episode of the Nativity shows the God of Abraham and Moses using people beyond trad-itional and territorial boundaries. He is, after all, a God without frontiers. Dieu sans frontières.

As Jesus grew up and embarked on his public ministry he was forever undermining and subverting the categories that made people feel safe. His practice of including those who were excluded made him look like a walking, personified Social Inclusion Unit. You name it and he included it. A leper, whose rotting flesh

barred him from the community, he touched with the silky grace of Diana. A prostitute, whose sexuality was seized by money not love, he allowed to touch his own body. A Samaritan, who to his audience had all the kudos of an American in Iraq. he saluted for his compassion. An tax inspector, filthy rich from exacting and extracting money from his own people to fill the coffers of a despised and occupying dictatorship, he befriended. Is it any wonder that they could not cope with this subversive and unpredictable mercy



A detail from the Adoration of the Magi (1598) by Jan Brueghel the Elder

venturer? The only way they could handle him was to manhandle him on to a cross. In all their dealings with him and through all their questioning of him as to who was in or out of God's Kingdom, included or excluded, they could not nail him down, so they nailed his body to wood to silence the questions with which he answered theirs.

It disturbed them that forgiveness was the word that was often on his lips. It was always in his heart. He could call a spade a spade and

hypocrites. He could preach hell-fire with all the vim of Ian Paisley. But he could never hide that gut-wrenching compassion that always emhraced the outsider. There was nobody beyond the pale of God's love. The least, the last and the lost these were his priority,

To save them was his mission. That's why he was born into this world. That's what his name. "Jesus", means: "God saves". He rescues the outsider, the outcast, the excluded. He also exposes the truth Herod a fox and religious leaders that we're all both agents and vic-

tims of exclusion through what we say and do to one another. We all need rescuing. That's why the Christmas story of God'a grand plan of inclusion acted out in Jesus Christ is good news; not just for a pregnant teenager and an asylum-seeking family, but for all the world on this ----

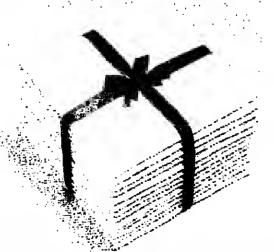
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silent and holy night. Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light; Radiant beams thy holy face With the down of saving grace.

Jesus, Lord, at Thu birth. Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.

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PANDORA

I'm stunned," spluttered Haslam. ALL APPEARS not to be well in the joint restaurant empire of Marco "I'm so stunned I don't Pierre White and the Granada really know what to group, since they launched a joint venture last year. Suspicions were say." With that, Nicky made his raised when people wishing to book for the Grill Room at the Café excuses and rang off. Perhaps Royal found staff hesitant to take Haslam could bookings, or were referred to cheer Mandy another of White's restaurants, the up by doing a Oak Room. Moreover, a rumour spot of has been circulating that a number interior reof Grill Room staff were dismissed designing earlier this week. A call to the publicity department of Forte Notting Hotels, the relevant arm of \mathbf{Hill} Granada, solicited a prepared abode? statement: "Both joint-venture parties are currently reviewing the ONE BURNING question positioning of the Grill Room and considering various opportunities that arises from for the restaurant in future." Mandy's resignation is Unfortunately, Pandora's attempts what will happen to his to contact Marco to discuss the faithful servant future of the Grill Room met with Benjamin Weggno response. Prosser. Oofy, as he is endearingly known, would surely not THE NEWS of Peter Mandelson's relish being lumbered with a

low-key role, any

more than his boss

doyen of so many

no doubt enjoyed

newspaper

would. So how will the

columnists, who have

resignation was too much for the designer Nicky Haslam. Haslam has spoken to Pandora before about his liking for Mandy (see 28 August) and was understandably upset when Pandora broke the news to him. "Good God, I didn't know that.

dealing with him as much as Pandora has, survive? Oofy Oofy,
give Pandora a call; let us know you're all

> Santa? Well, if you work for Harrods then it is important that you do. How important this is was demonstrated a few weeks ago when a photographer coileague of Pandora's called the Harrods press office to ask for some shots of their own Santa, "As long as you realise it is Christmas," the Harrods PR woman warned. Despite the photographer informing her that he no longer believed in Santa, she persisted with the fantasy

DO YOU believe in

act. When the photographer asked if it would be all right to snap their Santa having a cup of tea, the PR replied: "Oh no. he has a magic dust in his pockets, so he doesn't need to have a tea break." Ho, Ho, Ho.

THE IMPEACHMENT of President Clinton has proved a real boon to hars on both sides of the Atlantic. Tuffy Vetter, a bar manager of the Daily Grill in Washington, has named a new cocktail after the crisis, "Impeachmenthe" - half peach schnapps and half white crème de menthe. But Tuffy is not alone. Janet Evans, owner of Janet's Bar in South Kensington, has produced her own version, the "Impeach" – peach schnapps, orange juice and cream, "It's washed down with a Monica Lewinsky chaser," Evans told Pandora.

PANDORA HEARS that the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, has recently been the victim of a misunderstanding. Dining at a restaurant outside Cardiff a few weeks ago, Prescott asked the waitress for some "asparagus tips". Unfortunately, the waitress in question was just moving away from the table when Prescott made his request. and therefore didn't quite understand what the Deputy Prime Minister was saying. When she returned to the table. she informed him: "I'm sorry, we've only got Benson &

ite 11:50

DILEMMAS

WITH VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

I want to avoid a family Christmas

Geraldine is dreading Christmas because her stepfather bullies her mother - although her mother doesn't appear to mind - and he organises Christmas differently from the way it was done when her father was alive. Her brother's children also make her feel poignantly aware of her single, childless status. Could she be 'ill', and avoid the occasion?

VIRGINIA'S ADVICE

I DON'T think I've met anyone this year who isn't dreading Christmas. Is it the ghastly build-up and the knowledge that however nice our Christmases are. they're unlikely to live up to the standard presented by the media? Is it the fact that as you get older someone is nearly always missing from the Christmas scene - a divorced father, a dead pareot? Is it the poignant memory of wooderful

Christmases past that can never be re-

captured? Is it the memory of stressful childhood Christmases?

headmistress, my parents and I used to cover herself with protective emotional have gloomy Christmas lunches at a long, greasy, school trestle table in the dismal school dining-room, with nothing to drink hut a jug of water. Afterwards I would be given an improving book about architecture, unwrapped.

Now, I would give anything to go into a hole and hide during what's laughingly known as the "festive season".

So why don't I? I could at least, like several friends, take a holiday to India and avoid it all. And why do I think that Because my great aunt was also my Geraldine, if she possibly can, should

spray and speod at least Christmas

lunch, if oothing else, with her family? Christmas, even though the majority of us forget it or couldn't give a pin, is basically a religious festival. When we're in deep trouble, most of us, eveo nonbelievers, find ourselves automatically sending up a prayer to someone. Keeping this someone in mind for a couple of hours once a year is surely, if nothing else, insurance. Then, there is the family. We all hemoan the death of the family, hut by copping out we're adding to

the rot. Blood is thicker than water and however much we loathe our relations, most of them will rally round us in time of trouble, just out of duty if oothing else. 's worth touching base ooce a year.

Christmas is a time when you have to give presents - yes, eveo to people you can't stand, and even to people who have everything. But giving and receiving from people you dislike is good for the soul, eveo if you're cursing underneath. So this year Geraldine should go, re-

membering that Christmases past can never be recreated, and that if her

mother doesn't mind the way her husband treats her, theo it's none of Geraldine's business to get angry about it. Who knows, her mum may have a masochistic streak and secretly get turned oo by being ordered about. And if Geraldine feels lonely and barreo wheo faced with her nephews and nieces, she should remember that their little lives are eoriched by the presence of a kindly aunt. Maybe they'll barely talk to her, hut she should be there partly for their sake, to add to their feeling of security that they have a big loving family around them.

But there is a way out, and although it's too late for Geraldine to employ it now, she should plan it for oext year. She should hold Christmas for the family at her house. She should also invite a polite friend as a "bulking ageot". I have often been used at family Christmases as a kind of Fybogel, simply because a stranger's presence makes everyone behave themselves. The stepfather will not dream of hullying the mother, Geraldine can have Christmas "her" way, and rather than feel like a sad little spinster. she will feel like a powerful hostess.

READERS' SUGGESTIONS

Make a deal with your mother I really sympathise with Geraldine. As a manager in a London department store, the last thing I want to do is drive 150 miles to spend less than 48 hours with my mother and sisters and their children - who are naturally quite a handful.

Unfortunately my parents separated a few years ago, which made the decision to spend Christmas in London much more difficult. Geraldine should make a deal with her mother, What I do oow is spend a weekend at the beginning of December with my mother doing Christmas shopping and spending time together. We both enjoy it and look forward to seeing each other at this time. JEREMY EATON London SE10

Sacrifice yourself and go I too am a 35-year-old singleton with a stressful job, but Christmas can make me behave like a 15-year-old. I rarely or never row with family - except at Christ-

way of living together now that the childreo have left home and I respect their right to do so; but at the moment it seems to consist of the two of them constantly bickering in a way that makes spending time with them stressful.

This makes me think every year about not going home for "the day itself" but, it seems, only having a family of your own gives you the cast-iron right to spend Christmas by yourself. In the eod I will be going, and I think I would advise Geraldine to go too.

For me, buying loads of presents that give people pleasure, having a few drinks, helping with the cooking and a dose of teeth-gritting are worth it for my mother to be able to say to her friends that she is "having the whole family over at Christmas". ANONYMOUS

Spend the day with your friends It would be wrong for Geraldine to feign illness; she should tell her mother outmas. My parents are finding their own right that she is having Christmas with

friends this year. She doesn't have to say choose (with my partner) without the she hates her family Christmas, just that she owes it to her friends.

Yes, her mother will be upset - mine was when I dropped the "family" Christmas 23 years ago, but she soon got over ADAM WATSON it and I oow have the Christmas I London WCI

tyranny of fractious oephews and nieces. grumpy aunts and uncles, or enforced eating and drinking. Go for it, Geraldine - break loose; you will not regret it!

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Dear Virginia, I nm n single man of 30. I have the occasional girlfriend and once I was in love and wanted to get married, but it didn't work out, I have a good friend, a single woman of my own age, and we spend a lot of time together. Recently, however, she's hinted that she wants the relationship to be sexual. She insists it is just sex she is after, nothing more. I find her quite attractive, and in some ways this would suit me, but I don't love

her, and I worry that sex might

destroy our friendship. She says we're old enough not to let that happen.What do you think? Yours sincerely, Max

Anyone who has advice quoted will be sent n bouquet from Interflora Please send letters and dilemmas to Virginia Ironside, The Independent', 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf. London E14 5DL: fax 0171-293 2182; e-mail dilemmas @independent.co.uk - giving a postal address for the bouquet

Compromise is best

Be honest, resolute and prepared to compromise. Tell your mother that you wish to speed Christmas in your own home this year, but will visit them either immediately before or after. You could send flowers - and telephone on Christmas morning.

Doing this confirms you are part of the family (warts and all!), hut are also hreaking free of a gathering that causes vou stress. AUDREY ROTHERHAM Surbiton, Surrey

Grit your teeth and endure Geraldine should realise that there are thousands, maybe millions of us, who do not want to spend Christmas with "the family." Her family has its ways of making her feel bad; everyone else's families have theirs. She must grit her teeth, tell herself it's only one day, and look forward to Boxing Day and New Year. For obvious reasons, Anonymous

13 Fool (10)

Inexperienced (3,6,3,4) Only fair? (4)

Friendship (11) Cave-dweller (10)

Short piano pieces

21 Poem by Keats

(2.5, 4.4, 5)

ments (5)



POXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS JUMBO CROSSWORDS

CRYPTIC CLUES

Across 13 Monstrous creature with unexpected urban roots (10) No turning back? But good man turns, after consideration (2,6,8)Group of soldiers in-

volved in munitions Another newspaper carries important in-

formation of moment? (4-7) Yarn about ill bred dramatist (10) One may get fee after penning article curtailed from lack

of interest (6) Cs and Ms formed by cake decorations? 60 (8,3,9) US musical creating stir in US state (8) Exhumed dead -

isn't accepting one made a mistake (11) Old doctor giving shelter to children

Studies crime as crime? (10) Contrivances of French crimes (7) World is blurry, un-known, through half-

closed eves? (8) Suspend activities of professional crook

Lawsuit involving scoundrel falls (7) Charge on bond about to come down

Hand over film for developing in Welsh port (7,5) The manufacture of clothing could be addictive (5-7) Place ship around

front of smart turn Wobbly sea-legs, al-ways the same (7) United leading the way amongst division's newly-promot-ed teams? (8)

Long jail sentence a blow? Here's sup-port for those floundering (8) Unionist, leading one, having a new ideal (7)

Marijuana in powdery heap - mind! Chap going round capital of Hungary (a European city) (5) Prepares songs for court activities? Front of battalion

notice lights in wasteground (8) Gamekeeper's story unsuitable for maids? (4,11,5) Insect: sugar-crop left reduced by 50%

Party are all upset about Arab countries with certain financial links (6.4) Indicate woman and man to be whipped

Greatest feeling of offence, we hear (4) Psephologists responsible for choosing the President? Unearths an unusual

opera (10)

\$1000 - and keep it quiet - gets you facilities for key players Speed heading for Kendal's rising 100 mph (4)

US writer to attempt a particular genre Indian burial ground unlikely to be at-tacked by cowboys? Now it's Christmas?

(7-3)

Western heroines dress up in hoods (3-Footwear adds something decora-tive to a girl (3-5) It's responsibility, working with our people (4) Looked around

church, though not informally (8) Irish play - but it's the English, with an inch to spare! (4,5,5,6) Encourage those at-tacking the under-growth with choppers (3-7) Retained a hint of

temperance (though

very flushed exter-nally) (6)

Observe the loud sound of the birds from Norway? (12) Fastening for bags? Arranged closure during journey (7-4) Artists, as it were, in a desperate state

Negro spiritual presented as jazz with a touch of blues - very pleasant - No. 10 in hit parade (5,3,5,7) See Henry escape in the dusk (4-5) Change the last word (editor's No.2 intended to ditch article) (9)

Bandit the subject of a hunt - business involving heads of Spe cial Police (9) A case near to

labour? This may ensue (9) Surprise name given to institute after receiving millions (9) Hanging on to make circuit around Eastern ocean (9) Pass round a sink that's a fuel container

Respond to 'A penny for your thoughts'?

Unbridled cavalry I deem reckless (5-3-4) All over the gazetteer? (10)

Discourtesy in business centre involving one largely despica-ble (10) Historical period revealing wizards grasping conundrum? Not right (6,4) Vigorous American twice imprisoned for twenty-four hours (8) Married existence al-

lowed to be sent up in

Delivers works of a reflective nature (8) Singer? Mean to bring in one with grand style (8)
Handsome young
man with a head of
hair, attracting love

> has raised a central religion (6) Skilful, pert... (4) ...and almost rich (4)

Religious academic point about founder of

By Phi CONCISE CLUES Showing the effects of two sets of traditions (10)

Aberdonian, say (4) Frowned-upon pun-ishment for children Usual state (U.S) (8) Light musical drama (5,5)

23 In a chilly manner 25 Initial use of weaponry (5,6) Woodwind instru-In the manner of a marcb (mus.) (4.6) (3,4,2,3,8)Strong-smelling (7) With resentment (8)

Fair-skinned fellow Mosque feature (7) Stomach-turning (10) Biology, etc. (4,8) Essex woods (6,6) Campanologist (4-6) In general (7) Whit (9)

Member of a small ruling class (8) Puns, etc. (8) Sonnet or symphony, say (3,4) Corridor (10) Follow (5) Cursory remarks

Large breed of dog Almost is not good enough (1,4,2,2,4,2,1,4) Prison (4-2) Superfluous item

Town in Dorset (11) Weak (4) Proof of age (5,11) Superman's city (10)

Someone with idle thumbs? (8) Pertinent (8) Present (4) Lawyer (8) Novel by James Fenimore Cooper 11 Interfering (10) Reviewer (6) 300th anniversary Unpleasant (11) 22 Dealing with life (11) 24 It won't stand up in court (12,8) Irritable (9) With slyness (9) What's produced by 31 medium (9) Middle-class (9) 34 E.g. the Christmas rose (9) 35 Telepathy (4-7) 37 Healing (11) 40 No. 2 (6,6) Coverings during decorating (4-6) Very softly (10) Literary assistant (10) 50 Building containing fruit-trees (8) Self-centred (8) Location of a French cathedral (8)

Sufficient (8) Tightwad (6) Remained in hiding

Understand (4)

Game requiring a

table (4) THE NEW SHORTER OXFORD **ENGLISH DICTIONARY** HOW TO ENTER

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Gaddis

William

most important of the new American novelists to appear after the Second World War. He was also among the most undervalued perhaps not surprisingly, for his work, encyclopaedic, anagrammatic, intricately carpentered and constructed, was never to every taste.

Perhaps it was unfortunate that his first novel. The Recognitions (1955), a 956-page tour de force on fraudulence, counterfeiting, and the deceptions of art and religion, with a cast of some 50 characters, appeared in the 1950s. It was not a time given to literary experiment, and the book was subjected to much tostile reviewing - "a sobering experience", reflected Gaddis.

But it did find its own band of readers, was passed from hand to hand among students, deeply admired by fellow authors (Bellow. Doctorow), celehrated hy Tony Tanner in his masterly 1971 study of modern American fiction, City of Words. Finally it came to be seen as perhaps the first "postmodern" novel, a forerunner of the fiction of Thomas Pynchon and John Barth.

Possibly because of the poor press response to his first novel, Gaddis took 20 more years to produce his second, J.R. (1975), a satirical comedy about an 11-year-old high-school hoy who learns the rules of speculation and becomes a successful capitalist, exploiting the games that money lets us play.

Again, the book is massive, cen-

tred around a notion of extreme conspiracy, and deeply concerned with linguistic and lexical codes. The novel's first word is "Money" - "spo-ken in a voice that rustled" - and money is the interconnective tissue of this vast, sprawling, manipulating world. Language itself is manipulated, and the book belongs to that body of lexical fiction where the nature of language, codes and discourse is always under test. Modern information theory, cybernetics, is used to code and structure the novel - a game of "noise" and silence. This time the novel was well received, earning its author the National Book Award.

Ten years later Gaddis produced Corpenter's Gothic (1985) - a book whose title said much about the nature of his work. "Carpenter's Gothic" is an American style of domestic architecture where grand European designs are adapted and rethe age of Pynchon, Barth and ended his university career, and be clever ironies, there was always a po- December 1998.

WILLIAM GADDIS was among the carpentered for more humble circumstances, producing "a patchwork of conceits, borrowings, deceptions". It was a fair description of his own flavour, for the novel exploits many of the generic aspects of Gothic and sensational fiction without ceasing to have an air of parody. Gaddis's parody was intensely serious, however, his theme being the corruption - political. artistic, financial, and linguistic - of the modern American world in its age of hyper-reality. At this time, Penguin reissued all his books

Since then Gaddis produced one further book, A Frolic of His Own (1994). As J.R. begins with the word 'Money", this begins with the word "Justice?", and is an elaborate comedy of the role of the law and legislation in American society. This book has an increased topicality now

The title of the novel said much about the nature of his work. 'Carpenter's Gothic' is an American style of architecture adapting grand European designs for more humble circumstances

that the American legal system has succeeded in allowing a small incident in an Arkansas botel to develop, through a series of ever more absurd accusations and claims for restitution, into the grounds of impeaching a president. "Every profession is a conspiracy against the public." Gaddis writes wrily, "every profession protects itself with a anguage of its own."

Gaddis's themes have been central to modern American fiction in vard Lampoon. But a drunken brawl



The author of perhaps the first 'postmodern' novel - The Recognitions, 1955

DeLillo; he has been a major experimental writer who, over time, has greatly influenced many. Yet there was always a sense in which his own work was a frolic of his own, to some degree protected by a language of its own.

William Gaddis had strong literary credentials. Born to an affluent family in New York City, he went to Harvard and, like so many American writers, edited The Hor-

went to work for the New Yorker. He litical bitterness and a battle against then travelled a good deal in Latin America, settled in Greenwich Village (where he knew the "Beats"). then worked in Spain and Paris as a freelance author and speech-writer.

At various times be worked for American international corporations and witnessed American intervention in foreign lands, something that earned his satirical rage. Behind Gaddis's language experiments, his game-plans, his

the inauthentic. He was a man of great charm, wit and intelligence. Before be died, William Gaddis had completed another novel, Agape, His was an unusual but a major literary career, and one bopes it will earn him full recognition.

MALCOLM BRADBURY

William Gaddis, writer: born New York 29 December 1922; died East Hampton, New York 16

Bill Gregson

DURING THE 1960s and 1970s, at the time of the White Heat of the technological revolution, a number of industrialists - who never revealed their personal voting preferences - were of great help to the Wilson opposition, the 1964-70 government, and the 1974-79 government. Such a one was Bill Gregson of Ferranti, champion extraordinary of the importance of computer-controlled machine tools, who later became deputy chairman of the British Airports

Authority (1975-85). Gregson was outstandingly influential with politicians, partly on account of his ability to put incisive questions, and to offer practical ways of addressing complex probonly posed questions hut repeatedly came up with sensible answers. He was a man of technological vision.

He came of a family of colliery agents, who owned the engineering firm of Smith and Gregson, which was nationalised in 1948. He was always grateful for the education he received, particularly in mathematics and physics, at King William's College on the Isle of Man. After a period at Faraday House Engineering College he joined the RAF in 1941 and, such was his skill in the communications field, he rose to he a squadron leader by the time he

His wartime experience led to the position of technical sales manager of Ferranti in Edinburgh in 1946, and after five years he was promoted to the same job in London which he occupied until 1959. Returning to Scotland as assistant general manager of the huge Pilton plant, he was involved in the many controversies which surrounded Ferranti's contracts at that time.

My first encounters with him were extremely sharp. He was angry that I had suggested to the Public Accounts Committee, of which I was a very junior member, that Ferranti ought to be hrought before them to examine the Bloodhound project, the missile on which Ferranti's were alleged to have made huge profits and as a result of which Basil de Ferranti was hauled before the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons and required to give some money back to the Treasury.

Gregson thought that raw politicians ought to understand that companies should make bealthy profits on one military development project in order to have the wherewithal to finance other projects military and civil. However his personal relations were extremely good and like others with whom he had clashed I became a firm, lifelong friend.

Gregson was extremely active in the Britisb Electrotechnical and Allied Manufacturers Associations (Beama), and its president in 1983-84. Gordon Gaddes, Director-General of Beama from 1982 to 1985, describes him as "charming, incisive, determined and deeply committed. I remember especially one contriinfluence and persuasiveness and lasted for several years. 'Gordon,' he said. You need presidents from the very top of our industry."

He then invited the leaders of the engineering industry to dinner at the Café Royal and the level of acceptance was, remembers Gaddes "surprisingly high". The chairmen and chief executives alike agreed with Gregson when challenged to take up his mantle. Later, in succession, Beama presidents were to include Sir William Barlow, chairman of the Post Office and BICC, Viscount Weir of G.J. Weir and Co pump manufacturers, the Hon Geoffrey Wilson, chairman of Delta, Sir Terence Harrison, chairman and chief executive of Rolls Royce, and Sir Robert Davidson of GEC Alsthom - "all". says Gaddes, "as a result of

Gregson's dinner". Outside Ferranti, where he had a



Letting managers manage

good relationship with Sir Donald McCallum, his contemporary and general manager, Gregson was a di rector of British Telecom Scotland (1977-85), of Anderson Strathclyde, the coalmine equipment manufacturers, of Brammer, electronic engineers (1978-86), and of East of Scotland Industrial Investments. He was consultant to ICI and also found time to he the chairman of the Scottish General Practitioners Support Unit (1971-79) and deputy chairman of the Scottish Council for Development and Industry.

I record this sample of his various positions to indicate that he was a man who had a finger in every industrial pie north of the border - and with benevolent effect. Perhaps Vernon Murphy, now the Director of the Scottish Airports Authority and as a young man Director of Aberdeen Airport puts his finger on why Gregson was so effective:

The wonderful contribution which Bill made to the business of Scottish airports was that he played an active role using his wide experience of Scottish husiness in discussing and advising on issues, without ever straying over the divide of letting managers manage. That is somewhat unusual in people of his elevated position.

"He applied this to all levels of the husiness, and took a particular interest in the so-called outlying areas, the Highlands and Islands and Aberdeen."

It is indeed a rare quality among businessmen talking to politicians not to be hectoring and Gregson's questions, smile and chuckle were more effective than any amount of hectoring and lecturing. I think it was this sensitivity to other people's difficulties which endeared him to successive Secretaries of State for Scotland, particularly the late Willie Ross, who thought Gregson was one of his most valuable advisers.

Gregson spent a great deal of time as a board member of Livingston New Town between 1968 and 1976, years when I was constituency Member of Parliament for two-fifths of Livingston. Seeing him at close quarters he was extraordinarily persuasive in securing overseas investment, particularly from the United States.

The late Herb Allen, who was to bring the Cameron Ironworks - to be the biggest forge in Europe - to Livingston at the start of the North Sea oil industry, confided that one of the reasons that be had come to Livingston with his buge and welcome investment was that his grandfather bad been a shale miner in West Lothian and the other was the transparent technical competence and realism of the industrial board

member Bill Gregson. On the national level Gregson's contribution was through the ational Economic Deve Office, and particularly its committees on industrial strategies in the late 1970s. He was always conscious of the importance of automation hution he made which reflected his and was chairman of the Machinetool Expert Committee, 1969-70. He was also conscious of the im-portance of design and was a mean ber of the Design Council, 1980-85. He had esoteric interests which led him to be a commissioner of the Northern Lighthouse Board for 15 years, 1975-90.

Bill Gregson was the obverse of the scientist engineer simply inter-ested in his own field. For eight years he was a director of the Scottish National Orchestra, hecoming its vicechairman in 1981 and its chairman in a difficult period, 1984-85. Veronica Gibson, widow of Sir Alexander Gibson, the SNO's great conductor, recalls: "Alec found Bill Gregson a charming man, with a deep kno edge of music, and a most supportive and helpful chairman." Anyone invited to a happy bome made for Gregson by Rosalind, his wife, who died in 1994, would be amazed at his skill in automating his residence and in the forgotten art of cabinet-

making with his own hands. Raymond Williamson, chairman of the orchestra for the last decade, said: "Bill Gregson played a vital role in encouraging sponsorship without which we would not have had the financial support to develop."

TAM DALYELL

William Derek Hadfield Gregson, electronic engineer: born Stock port, Lancashire 27 January 1920, assistant general manager, Ferranti (Scotland) 1959-83; ČBE 1970; Deputy Chairman, British Airports Authority 1975-85; married 1944 Rosalind Reeves (died 1994; three sons, one daughter); died Edinburgh 15 December 1998.

Hrair Maroukhian

Maroukhian

waged a world-

wide campaign to

force Turkey to

HRAIR MAROUKHIAN beaded the leading political party in the Armenian diaspora for nearly a quarter of a century.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), or Dashnak party, is not only a political party, but a way of life for its members, particularly in the diaspora communities of the Middle East, from where Maroukhian came, and in the United States. Besides its political activities, the party runs a series of newspapers. social cluhs, youth groups and scouting organisations, and has strong influence over parts of the Armenian Church.

By the 1970s, when Maroukhian was elected chairman of the party's highest body the Bureau - a position to which he was re-elected six times - the party was a rather timid shadow of its former self, rooted in its Middle Eastern setting. Maroukhian transformed it into an aggressive anti-Turkish hody waging a world-wide campaign to force Turkey to admit guilt for the massacres of more than one million Armenians in Anatolia and the expulsion of almost the entire Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire in the early years of

this century. Accused by the Turks of being the sponsors of terrorist attacks on Turkish diplomats from the mid-1970s, the Dashnaks always distanced themselves from Armenian terror groups. However, as late as 1993 Maroukhian was denied entry to Canada, as the authorities there suspected the party of links to



the perpetrators of two attacks on Turkish targets in Canada in the early 1980s

The ARF - founded in Tiflis in 1890 - was always an alliance of strong nationalists and revolutionary socialists. Maroukhian was a strong ideologue who defended the party's socialist identity, to the displeasure of some members who felt it should shed its socialist

True to its revolutionary origins, the ARF remained a secretive, conspiratorial party suspicious of outsiders. It was banned by the Soviet authorities after they took power in Armenia in 1920 from the shortlived Dashnak-led government. The Dashnaks remained fiercely anti-Soviet until the early 1980s, when KGB infiltration and the changing international climate caused a re-

admit guilt for the massacres of one million Armenians in Anatolia ·

think among senior ARF leaders, who were won over to the view that the Soviet Union had at least preserved Armenian identity and a piece of territory the Armenians could call their own.

The party revived its activities in Armenia in the late 1980s and - with national independence once again in sight - the ARF leadership officially relocated to Armenia in August 1990. Maroukhian was able to visit the country and engage in its volatile politics. The Dashnaks took a hard line in the conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave whose Armenian majority were fighting for independence from Azerbaijan, and on Turkey

Levon Ter-Petrosyan, who in 1991 became independent Armenia's first president, was increasingly intolerant of Dashnak criticism of his gov-

opinion became even sharper when Maroukhian alleged that Ter-Petrosyan had acted as a KGB informer when be was a student. In June 1992 Ter-Petrosyan announced in a televised speech that he was expelling Maroukhian from Armenia and banned him from any future visits.

Maroukhian, by now a Greek citizen, was in Armenia awaiting the convention of the 25th ARF World Congress which was to be held in Armenia for the first time since 1919. Maroukhian complied with Ter-Petrosyan's request, stating that the ARF would not incite civil unrest in the homeland. The World Congress had to be postponed and convened later in another venue. Maroukhian could do little but

watch from Athens as relations between the Armenian government and the Dashnak-tinged elements of the diaspora worsened. In December 1994 Ter-Petrosyan banned the ARF from operating in Armenia, alleging that it was engaged in a cam-

paign of terrorism and subversion. Born in 1928 in Iran, Maroukhian was an engineer by training and profession, though politics was his passion. He joined the ARF as a young man and assumed leadership posts in the party serving as chairman of the Central Committee in Iran. In 1963 the 18th ARF World Congress elected him to the Bureau. He served on the Bureau continuously, becoming chairman in 1971. He was based initially in Beirut but moved to Athens with his

ernment. Such differences of family during the Lebanese civil war when the party beadquarters transferred to Greece.

By the time of his expulsion from Armenia in 1992, Maroukhian's long political career at the helm of the Dashnaks was about to end. In July 1994, while he was swimming in the Mediterranean off Athens, he suffered a massive brain aneurysm. He fell into a coma from which be would never recover. He was cared for at home by his wife and family, kept alive by tubes and fluids. He lost his position as Bureau chairman and was barely mentioned even by the Dashnak press.

This year Ter-Petrosyan's successor as Armenian president. Robert Kocharian, moved to defuse the hostility to the Dashnaks in Armenia itself. In May he lifted the ban on the party and revoked Ter-Petrosyan's ban on Maroukhian's entry into Armenia. But by this time Maroukhian was unaware of his political rehabilitation in what he considered his homeland.

Although he was preparing to move permanently to live in Armenia at the time of his expulsion, Maroukhian never fulfilled his dream. Armenia will however be his resting place.

FELIX CORLEY

Hrair Maroukhian, politician: born Kermonshah, Îran 1928; Chairman, Dashnak Bureau 1971-94: married 1958 Anahit Ter-Sarkissian (two sons, two daughters); died Athens 21 December 1998.

Archie Moore

portunity slip away as Moore put on

what many regarded as one of box-

By the seventh round, the mus-

cular Durelle was in retreat and by

the 11th, when he was knocked out,

ing's greatest comebacks.

IT IS one of the boxing game's great adages that the measure of a boxer's spirit is his ability to accept defeat and, more importantly, to get up after a knockdown, writes Frank Gray. Archie Moore Jobituary by Boh Mee, 11 December) fought many wars - notably against Rocky Marciano, whom he knocked down once but wbo rose up and

knockout in the ninth round. Despite the defeat, Moore - who was 41 - proved he was far from finished when, on an arctic night in Montreal on 10 December 1958, he defended his light-heavyweight title against the Commonwealth champion Yvon Durelle, a French-Canadian from Baie Ste Anne, New

ice hockey bayed for Moore's hlood and were nearly given it in the opening seconds when Durelle felled Moore with a devastating right hand.

Moore struggled to his feet within a microsecond of being counted out, only to be knocked down twice more in that round, both for ninecounts. The screaming crowd of he had been down four times. The pounded his way through Moore's Brunswick. The partisan crowd at 18,000 - sensing a rare world title for two fought again the following August

pinpoint punching to win by a the Montreal forum, mainly used for a Canadian fighter - saw Moore but Moore made no mistakes and disknocked from rope to rope for five natched Durelle in three rounds. rounds, but then had to see the op-

One of Moore's "tricks" was his famed wrap-around defence, in which, when under attack, he literally wrapped his arms around his face and peeked out from between his forearms. "You see, I was a bad httle boy," he liked to tell people, "and my mama had to whup me a lot; this is the way I learned how to defend myself."

It was ironical, then, that Moore, long retired, was in the heavyweight champion George Foreman's corner when he fought Muhammad Ali in Zaire in 1974. But it was Ali, not Foreman, who employed a peek-a-boo defence, which he used while Foreman punched himself into exhaustion, leaving himself ripe for a knockout in the eighth round

Moore has always lacked a good

biographer. George Plimpton, the New York writer, editor and bon vivant, when asked if he might take it on, shook his bead. He had written about Moore before - his 1959 account of his sparring session with Moore in which he paid the price for landing a lucky punch. You know something," he recalled, "he brose my nose." He looked like it still he 40 years on.

احكذا من الاحل

Bic HS. JAR HAGES & DEATHS

ORLAM :

Title GUARD Bung Guards Figure hold Care

Ben Cold Strange Con Long. han palar. 30am. band promise Keish In MORROW: The Wairy Mounted herman morning the 15 " Card at Horse

ben ments for Wells HIGHS. MERLY, ES & DEATHS hells Idoptions, Marhere leaths. Memorial Medding anniver the in memoriam are

the of the Gazette and the organical and the Gazette the ments are the set ine, it ill cates

CHURCH SERVICES

CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY

CANTERBURY CATHEBRAL: 25 December 8am HC; 16am Matins, Britleo in E; 11am Sung Eucharst, Missa brevis in 2 flat (Mozart), The Archbishop; 3.15pm Evensong and Carols, Dyso

YORK MINSTER: 25 December Bam, 8 (Sant HC. 10am Sung Euchartel. Schubert in G. The Arch-bishop: 11 48am Matins. Ireland in F. The Very Rev Raymond Furnell: 4pm Evensong. Aston in F

AIRMINGRAM CATHEDRAL: 24 Departure 11.30pm Midnight Nass, The Very Rev Peter Berry, 25 December 9om Morning Prayer; 9.15am HC; 11am Choral Eucharist, The Right Rev

mark Samer BLACKBURN CATHERRAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Cammunion, The Provel: 25 December Burn HC: 9.15am Choral Mauns; 10.30am Christmas Eucharist. The Bickers BRADFORD CATHEDRAL: 21 December 11.30pm First Communion of Christmas, Asion set-ting, The Provest, 25 December 8am IIC: 10.15am

HC, The Bishop

ARISTOL CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11:20pm

Midnight Eucharist, Musse de minuit (Charpentier). The Dean, 25 December 8:40am Matins:
10am Festal Eucharist, St. Nicholas mass (Haydm).
The Bishop: 3:20pm Evening Prayer

BURY ST EDMUNDS, 34 Edmundsbury CatheORAL: 24 December 11:30pm Midnight Sung

Eucharist, Canon Marion Mingins, 25 December

8am HC: 10am Christmas Sung Eucharist. The

Bishop: 3:30pm Choral Evensong

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11:30pm

Midnight Eucharist, 25 December 7:45am Matins;

Midnight Eucharist, 25 December 7,45am Ma Ram Eucharist, 10,30am Sung Eucharist; 4pm CHELMSFORD CATHEORAL: 24 December CHELAUSFORD CATHEOTOGE 21 December 11.20 Midnight Mass, Misso ad praesepe (Mal-colm), The Provost, 25 December Barn HC, Canon Andrew Knowles; 9 Edam Eticharist, The Bishup: 11am A Service for Christmas Mortang, Te Deum (Batter), Canoo David Knight; 12.10pm HC; 5.15pm

CHESTER CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11 30pm Midnight Eucharist Canon Trevor Dennis, 23 December 10am Eucharist, The Bishop, 11 30nm Eucharist, The Dean; 4.15pm Choral Evensong

- 3

CHICHESTER CATHEURAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Eucharist, Stanford in C. The Treasurer, 25 December 8om H.C. 10am Natins, Stanford in G. The Bishop; 11am Sung Eucharist, Messe solennelle Wieroer, The Dean

5 30pm Exensory
COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: 25 December 7.40am
Morning Prayer, 8am HC: 10.30am Cathedral
Eucharist for Christmas Day, Durke in F. The
Bishop: \$30pm Evening Prayer at the Crib.
OERBY CATHEORAL: 24 December 11 30pm
Midnight Eucharist, 25 December 8am HC, 10am
Malins: 11am Sung Eucharist, 5.30pm Evensong.
OURHAM CATHEORAL: 25 December 8am HC,
Caron Thevor Willmott; 10am Malins, Vaughan
Williams 10 G, The Oean; 11.15am HC, Missa brevis
in D (Midart), The Bishop; 3.30pm Evensong. St
Prui's service (Howells).

Faul Service (Howens), ELV CATHEORAL, 21 December 11.30pm First Eucharist of Christmas, Darke in E. The Bishop, 25 December 8 15am HC, Canon John Inge; 16.30amSung Eucharist, Missa brevis in G (Mozard, The Dean, 3.45pm Evensong with Carols, Jesus College service (Mathias). Jesus Couege service (Manthas).

EXETER CATHEDRAL: 24 Occumber 11 20pm
Watchnight Service, The Minister. 25 December
tam. 8am HC; 9.45am Procession and Sung
Eucharist; 1.15am Matins; 4pm Evensong with
Carols from the Ministrels' Gallery.
GLOUI'ESTER CATHEDRAL: 24 December
6om Cliffithms Carol Service with Blessions of the

6cm Ciristmas Carol Service with Blessing of the Crib, 24 December 10.15am Sung Matins in the Quire;10.45am Eucharist, The Bishop. GUILDFORD CATHEORAL: 24 Decemi 11.45ph Midnight Eucharist, 25 December Bam HC, 9.5am Sung Eucharist; 11.30am Matins; 4pm Catheiral Service of Nice Lessons and Carols. HERIFORD CATHEDRAL: 25 December Bam IC with hymns; 10am Procession and Catheiral Eccharist, The Bishop; 11.30am Chord Matios, The Dean; 3.30pm Choral Evense

LEICESTER CATHEORAL: 21 December 11 Sogn Midnight Eucharist, 25 December 8am HC: D.30am Choral Matins: 120m HC. LICHTELD CATHEDRAL 31 Decembe 11.30m Midnight Mass throadcast by the BBC, pleast be scaled by 11.10pm; 25 December Barn HC: 0.30am Sung Eucharist of Christmas Day, Missi Sancti Nicolai (Haydot, The Bishop; 5.30pm Funded Day

Evering Prayer LINGOLN CATHEDRAL: 24 December 24 Decem Midoght Eucharist and the Blessing of the Crib. The Phancellor, 25 December 8am HC with Carols



Choristers at King's College, Cambridge

David Rose

Procession, The Bishop; 11,15om Matins, The Dean; 3,45 pm Choral Evensong and Procession with Carols. Matins with Carols; 12.30pm Eucharist; 5.30pm Evensong with Corols Around the Crib, ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 24 December LIVERPOOL CATHERRAL 25 December 11.30pm Midnight Mass, Messe solennelle Alanglaist, The Bishop. 25 December 8am HC; 10.30am Sung Eucharist, Messe solennelle Wiernel, The Dean; 5.30pm Evensong. 10.30an; Festival Eucharist for Christmas Osy, Coronation mass (Mozart), The Bishop, MANCHESTER CATHEORAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Mass, Messa Sancti Johannis di Deo (Haydn), The Bisbop, 25 December 8.45am Matins; 9am Eucharist; 10.30am Sung Eucharist, Kronungsmesse (Mozart), The Dean. ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL: 24 Decemb 11.30pm Sung Eucharist, 25 December 8am HC with Carols; 9.30am Parish Eucharist, The Bishop; 11.15am Malins, The Dean; 12.30pm HC. 11.13am Malins, The Dean; 12.30pm HC.
SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: 24 December
11.45pm Midnight Mass, The Bishop, 25 December
8am RC; 10am Sung Eucharist, The Dean; 11.45am
8amily Service; 3pm Choral Evensong, Procession
and Blessing of the Crib.
SHEFFELID CATHEDRAL: 24 December
11.300m Midnleht Eucharist with the Cutheriral NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL; 24 December 11.30pm Blessing of the Crib and First Eucharist of Christmas, Canon Peter Strange, 25 December 8am HC; 9,30am Procession and Solema Sung Eucharist, The Bishop. NORWICH CATHEDRAL: 21 December 11.15pm Midoight Eucharist of Christmas, The Dean, 25 December 10,34am Family Eucharist of Christmas Day, The Bishop: 3.30pm Festal Evensong, Precession and Carols, 11 30pm Midnight Eucharist with the Cathedral Choic 25 December 10 30am Sung Eucharist with

SOUTHWELL CATHEDRAL 21 December 11,45pm First Communion of Christman, 25 December 8am HC; 9,30am Parish Communion; 11am Matios; 12,15pm HC; 3,15pm Evensong

Procession and Carols.
OXPORD, Chist Church, 23 December 8am Eucharist; 10am Sung Matins, The Bishop; 11.15am Sung Eucharist; The Dean; 6pm Evensong, PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL 24 December 1.45pm Solemn Eucharist, The Bishop, 25 December 7.30am, 8.15am HC; 10am Family Eucharist, The Dean; 11.30am Malins, The Precentor; 3.30pm Eugapen and Procession. TRURO CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Mass, 25 December 8am HC; Idam Solema Sung Eucharist; 5pm Evening Prayer. WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL: 21 December 1 PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL: 24 December Midnight Mass. 25 December 8am HC; 9.15am Parish Communion; 11am Solemn Eucharist. 11.30pm Midnight Mass, Nesse de mionii (Charpentiert, The Provost. 23 December 8am HC: 9.30am Parish Encharist with Carols; 11.15am Cathedral Eucharist with Carols, Missa brevis (Kodaly), The Bishop: 4pm Evening Prayer. WELLS CATHERRAL 24 December 11.30pm First Communion of Christmas, Bistop Jim. 25 December 8am HC; 9.45am Christmas Thanksgiv-ing and Eucharist, The Dean; 11.30am Matins; 3pm RIPON CATHEDBAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Eucharist. 25 December Bam Eucharist; WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL 24 December 11.30pm Sung Eucharist. 23 December 8am HC: 9.30am Choral Eucharist; 11.30am Christman

Professor Sir Kenneth Cal-

man, chief medical officer,

Department of Health, 57;

Mr Brian Connelly, diplo-

mat, 57; Mr Nick Conway.

10am Mauns: 11.15am Sung Eucharist; 3.30pm Choral Evensong, WORCESTER CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Eucharist. 23 December 7.15 am Matins; 8am HC; 9.30am Pamily Eucharist; 11am Sung Eucharist; 4pm Evensong

BANGOR CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm First Mass of Christmas, Ircland in C. The Dean. 25 December Eam HC. The Dean; 9.45am Cymun Bendigaid, Esgob Bangor, 11am Choral Eucharist, Little organ mass (Haydin, The Bishop, ARECON CATHEDRAL: 25 December 7am HC: Bam HC with Carols: 11am Sung, Eucharist and Sermon; 5.45pm Choral Evensong, Carolife Lilandalf Cathedral: 24 December 9.30pm Procession, alessing at the Crib and the First Eucharist of Christmas. 25 December 7am Holy Eucharist, 1.30am Natins and Litang; 3am Holy Eucharist; 1.30am Natins and Litang; 3am Holy Eucharist; 2.15am Holy Eucharist; 1.21am Holy Eucharist; 1.23pm Evensong.

NEWPORT CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm NEWFORT CATHEDRALE 24 December 11.supm Midnight Mars, Fr David Mathews, 25 December Barn Eucharist of the Down; 10.2dam Sung Eucharist of the Day, The Bishop of Monamouth. ST ASAPH CATHEDRALE 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Mars, The Dean, 25 December Barn Holy Eucharist With Carols, 11am Choral Eucharist, The Archbishop of Wales; 3.30pm Evensong.

ABERDEEN, St Andrew's Cathedrah 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Mass, Rarwood in A flat. 25 December 10.45am Sung Eucharist, Mer-

heese setting.

ABERDEEN, St. Machar's Cathedral: 21 December 11pm Festival Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, The Minister 25 December 11am Family Service with HC, The Minister.

BUNDEE CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.30pm in Midnight Eucharist, The Bishop. 25 December 10.30am Eucharist with Carols.

10.30am Eucharist with Carots.

EOINBURGH, SI Giles' Cathedral: 24 December 11.30am Watchinghl Service, The Minister 25 December Eam, 10am Morning Service (HC), The Minister: 11.30am Morning Service The Minister, EDINAURGH, SI Mary's Cathedral: 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Mass, Nesse de minuit (Charpentier), The Provost. 25 December 10.20am Festal Eucharist, Missa brevis in D (Mozart), The Rishop of Edinburgh.

GLASGOW CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11 150m GLASGOW CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11 150m. dishop of Edinburgh.
GLASGOW CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11.15pm
Choral Service. 25 December 11am Choral Service.

GLASGOW, St Mary's Cathedral: 24 Decembe 11.30pm Midnight Mass, The Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, 25 December 8.30am Eucharist: 10am Sung Eucharist; 12pm HC. INVERNESS CATHE ORAL: 21 December 11.30pm Midnight Mass, The Bishop of Moray. Ross and Carthness: 25 December 8.15am HC; 9.30am Family Eucharist; 11am Sung Eucharist, The Provost.

AELFAST CATHEDRAL; 24 December 11.30pm Midnight Communion. The Dean, 25 December 10am HC; 11am Christmas Eucharist, The Bishop

AIRMINGHAM, St Chad's Cathedral: 25 December 12am Midnight Mass, The Architishop; Ham Mass, The Cathedral Administrator. LIVERPOOL, Metropolitan Cathedral: 24 December 11,15 pm Carols and Christmas Music; 11,20pm Midnight Mass, The Archbishop, 25 December 9am Mass (broadcast live on &&C Solenin Mass; 6 30pm Vigil

ST PAUUS CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11,30pm Midnight Eucharist, Missa Sancti Nicolai Havdin, Canon Stephen Oliver: 25 December 8am HC: 8.45am Matins, 11am Sung Eucharist, Missa Sancti Nicolai (Haydin), The Deon: 3.15pm Evensong, Stanford in C.

Stanford in C.
WESTMINSTER ABBEY: 24 December 11.30
Sung Eucharist of Christmas Midnight, Messe
solennelle (Langlois), The Very Rev Dr Wesley
Carr. 25 December Ram HC; 10.3000 Sung
Eucharist of Christmas Oge, The Very Rev Dr
Wesley Carr. 12.15pm HC; 3pm Festal Evensong,
Kelly in C.

SOUPHWARE CATHEDRAL: 24 December 11 30pm Midnight Mass, The Bishop. 25 December Sun Christmas Eucharist with Carols. The Provost, 11am Christmas Choral Eucharist, The Provost. ST GEORGE'S CATHEORAL, Southwark, 24

December 11.30pm Carols and Rearings, followed by Solemn Mass of the Nativity, Archbishop Michael Bowen, 25 December Sum Mass with Car-ols; Bour Family Mass, Archbishop Michael Bowen; 11.30am Choral Moss, WESTMINSTER CATREORAL 24 December 11.50m Vigil and Midnicht Mass, 25 December 11.15pm Vigil and Midnight Mass. 25 December 7am, 8am Mass: 9am Family Mass with Carols:

The seasonal silence of a blank greeting

IT IS Christmas and there- municate effectively in the grass background. Another fore time for churches to attempt once more to say something meaningful about a season that seems to have lost its way. The difficulty seems to be in finding the right words, as many a church noticehoard will amply testify.

These wayside pulpits have, over the years, made numerous attempts to remind the passing public of "the reason for the season". In recent times they have come up with naff lines like "Give Jesus your Christmas Presence" or dubious attempts to get really modern with the Bad Hair Day line -"You're a virgin, you've just given birth. and now three kings have shown up..."

The trouble is that such

slogans are more likely to have raised a chuckle among wet and wintry churchgoers than to have appealed to those beyond the frontiers of faith. This time last year the Christian Advertising Network tried to address that fact with a poster which read: "Christmas - copyright: It's not a genuine Christmas without Church". Sympathetic as I am to the organisation and its mission, I beg to differ. Nohody "owns" Christmas. The patent on a "genuine" Christmas is not the property of the Church, and never has been. Christmas belongs to the people; and if the Church owns many interpretations of its meaning, it cannot lay claim to all

Launcelot Andrewes, in his Christmas Day sermon of 1620, describes the incarnation of Christ as "the Word that cannot speak". In using this phrase, he meant to draw his listeners to the powerlessness of Christ. He also points to the heart of the problem for religious advertising.

of them.

In contemporary life it is the Image which is generally accepted to carry the greatest power. But religion, and particularly Christianity, communicates primarily through words rather than images: it is aural and oral rather than visual; cognitive rather than expressive. Apart from the little that appears to com- of white crosses, with a green titute. Sheffield University

modern-day public domain. It could be argued that the most effective forms of Christian advertising are visual. Cathedrals are sermons in stone; paintings homilies on canvas. Yet, whilst there is some truth in the maxim that "the camera is a blunt instrument compared to a pen and the imagination", the relationship between words and images has changed in contemporary culture. Today.

takes us to the text. More than that the Bible is no longer a principal source

once more, much as in the

medieval times of mass illit-

eracy, it is the image that

MEANINGS OF CHRISTMAS

MARTYN PERCY

The modern Church has abandoned the ambiguity of the image and taken refuge in the

dull safety of words. It is time to revert to ancient instincts

of morality, functioning as a rule book; rather it has been transformed into source of spirituality, which acts as a guide, Its stories have superseded its didactic as the wellspring of its power. Thus, the meaning of the Good Samaritan is more important than the Ten Commandments even assuming that the latter could be remembered in any detail hy anyone.

Into this milieu it is the image which speaks with most potency. Secular advertising understands this well. Benetton, the clothes manufacturer has run ads for many years that use no text to convey the "United Colours of Benetton" global message. Interestingly many of them exploit situations where ouce religious imagery would have held sway. Recent ads have Martim Percu is Director of ity has no logo for its Logos; included a military cemetery the Lincoln Theological Ins-

centred on a family grieving around an emaciated and dying man. Another on a birth. And Benetton has even exploited overtly religious imagery with a controversial shot of a monk and a num, both dressed in hlack and white

robes, exchanging a kiss. The images are striking for their simplicity: they cover themes such as the commonality of humanity, peace, reconciliation, life and death. Without using words, the ads speak through the pictures to the themes implied in the words "united" and "colours". They convey a moral message, arresting the view-

er and inviting reflection. Why can't the churches do the same? One answer to this must lie in with the recurring tradition of iconoclasm which strove to suppress images in places of worship. They did so, in part. because images cannot be controlled in the way words can - people participate in stories and images at their own level: there is an in-huilt multiplicity of meaning; truth is plural. In their desire to delimit doctrine, reform and rule, Protestant and Catholic churches have frequently fled from the image and sought the sanctuary of words.

Yet Christ is not a text. Christmas is "the word made flesh" - a most striking visual image. And he comes as a child - the Speechless Word who is God. So, here is my suggestion for an advertisement for Christmas, A simple photograph of a mother and child sitting in some hovel. The child sucks greedily at the hreast, and, in the background, there is the shape of a figure trying to make a fire to keep them all warm.

This image - of interdependency, warmth, vulnerability. poverty and need - does not require any text. Yet it tells the Christmas story in a simple frame. It might not drive people to church. But it might at least make us stop for a moment and think, as we pass by with the last-minute shopping, hurrying home to our own Christmas.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

WNTERFLOOD: Peggy, died Iriday 18 December: Mother of flarion. Our sympathies are rith you, Marion, from Lesli, Inne, Beverley, Ginnette, Lileen, Jim, Brian, Richard, John Beb, Mike, Steve and ohn, Bob, Mike, Steve and

IN MEMORIAM

GLCHRIST FISHER: Alasdair.

ARIKIAN: In loving memory of Manoug Parikian, who died on Christmas Eve, 1987.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards. 11am; 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Welsh Guards, TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Annouocements for Gazette BIRTHS. MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In memoriam) are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra.

FORTHCOMING MARRIAGES

Mr M. T. Prestoo and Miss A. Manley The engagement is announced between Mark. younger son of Mr Richard Preston, of Coleford. Gloucestershire, and Mrs Lesley Broughton, of Welney, Cambridgeshire, and April, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Frank Manley, of Newhayes Farm, Whimple, Devon. The marriage will take place on 17 July 1999.

BIRTHDAYS

TODAY: Mr Alistair Baillie, former diplomat, 66; Mrs Mair Barnes, chairman, Dollond and Aitchison, 54; Mr John Barron, actor. 78; Professor Anthony Clare. psychiatrist, 56; Lord Cowdrey of Tonbridge, consultant, Barclays Bank and former cricketer, 66; Sir Gerald Elliot, former chairman, Christian Salvesen, 75; Mr Jeremy Hindley, horseracing trainer, 55; Sir James Hodge, ambassador to Thailand, 55; Ms Heleo Jones MP. 44; Dame Joan Kelleher, former director, WRAC. 83: Sir Ivan Lawrence QC, former MP, 62; Dr John Marek MP, 58; Miss Suzy Menkes, fashion editor, International Herald Tribune, 55: Miss Thea Porter, fashion designer, 71: Mr Norman Rossiogton. actor, 70: Mr John D. Taylor MP, 61; Miss Carol Vorderman, hroadcaster and writer, 38; Mr Philip Ziegler, writer and editor, 69.

TOMORROW: Princess Alexandra, 62; Princess Alice, Dochess of Gloucester, 97; Lord Annan, writer, 82; Miss Sheila Browne, former Principal, Newnham College, Cambridge, 74;

actor, 36; Mr Quentin Crisp, writer and performer, 90; Mr Edward Davey MP, 33; Ms Barbara Follett MP, 56: Professor Christopher Frayling, Rector and Vice-Provost, Royal College of Art, 52; The Right Rev Noel Jooes, Bishop of Sodor and Man, 66; Miss Annie Lennox, singer, 44; Professor Philip Love. Vice-Chancellor, Liverpool University, 59; Mr Tony Martin, singer and actor, 85: Sir Peter Matthews, former Chief Constable of Surrey, 81; Mr Ismail Merchant, film producer, 62; Professor Phyllida Parsloe, former Warden of Wills Hall, Bristol University, 68; Mr Lawrie Quinn MP, 42; Mr Noel Redding, rock musician, 53; Mr John Sharman, former High Commissioner to the Seychelles, 61; Lord Sheppard of Didgemere, former chairman, Grand Metropoli-

tan, 66; Miss Sissy Spacek, actress, 49; Mr Nigel Starmer-Smith, sports commentator, 54; Sir Noel Stockdale, life president of the ASDA group, 78; Mr Stephen Twigg MP, 32; The Right Rev Benjamin Vaughan, former Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, 81; Sir Christopher Wates, chief executive of Wates Building Group, 59.

ANNIVERSARIES

TODAY Births: John Lackland, King of England, 1167; St Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, 1491; William Warhurton, hishop and scholar, 1698; James Prescott Joule. physicist, 1818; Matthew Arnold, poet and critic, 1822; Louis Jouvet, actor and

director, 1887; Howard Robard Hughes, millionaire and recluse, 1905; Ava Lavinia Gardner (Lucy Johnson), actress, 1922.

Deaths: Sir Thomas Beaufort. Duke of Exeter admiral and commander, 1426; Vasco da Gama, explorer and navigator, 1524; William Makepeace Thackeray, novelist, 1863; Frank Richards Charles Harold St John Hamilton), writer and creator of "Billy Bunter", 1961; Peter Lawford, actor, 1984; John James Osborne, playwright and actor, 1994.

On this day: an attempt was made to assassinate Napoleon 1, 1800; Britain's first self-propelled vehicle was tested by Richard Trevithick, 1801; William Burke, body-snatcher, went on trial, 1828; part of the Capitol, Washington, and almost the whole Library of Coogress was destroyed by fire, 1851; Giuseppe Verdi's opera Aida was performed for the first time. Cairo 1871; the Coliseum Theatre, London, opened, containing Britain's first revolving stage, 1904; Ahmed ben Zogu (later King Zog) overthrew the Albanian government and proclaimed a republic, 1924; the Apollo 8 spacecraft orbited the moon and sent back a Christmas message, 1968.

Today is Christmas Eve and the Feast Day of St Adela, St Delphinus, St Gregory of Spoleto, St Irmina, St Sharbel Makhlouf and Saints Tharsilla and Emiliana.

TOMORROW Births: Noel Coypel, painter, 1628; Sir Isaac Newton, mathematician, physicist and astronomer 1642, Dorothy Wordsworth, writer and sister of the poet, 1771; Charles Pathe, film pioneer, 1863; Maurice Utrillo, painter.

1883; Conrad Nicholson Hilton, hotel proprietor, 1887; Dame Rebecca West (Cecily Isabel Fairfield1, writer, 1892; Humphrey DeForest Bogart, actor, 1899; Cabell (Cab) Calloway, jazz singer and handleader, 1907.

Deaths: Pope Adrian I, 795; Sir Matthew Hale, Chief Justice and law reformer, 1676; W.C. Fields (William Claude Dukenfieldi, film comedian, 1946; Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin, comedian and film producer, 1977; Joan Blondell, actress, 1979; Joan Miró, artist, 1983; Nicolae Ceausescu, former Romanian president and his wife. Elena. executed by firing squad 1989: Dean Martin (Dino Paul Crocetti), singer and actor, 1917.

On this day: William 1, "the

Conqueror", was crowned in Westminster Abbey, 1066; Vasco da Gama sighted the African coastline of what is now Natal, 1497; the Mayflower arrived at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, 1620; the Great Frost of London began, when temperatures were 17 degrees below freezing, 1730; George Washington crossed the Delaware river, 1776; the first Christmas tree was put up at Queen's Lodge, Windsor, by Queen Charlotte, 1800; the Emperor Hirohito acceded to the Japanese throne. 1926; the Stone of Scone was stolen from Westminster Abbey, 1951; Vaclay Havel was elected president of Czechoslovakia, 1989; the Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev, announced that he had resigned all offices, and that the Soviet Union was officially disbanded, 1991.

Tomorrow is Christmas Day and the Feast Day of St Alburga, St Anastasia of Sirmium, St Eugenia and the Martyrs of Nicomedia



LITERARY NOTES

CEDRIC CULLINGFORD

A writer who was too famous too early

THE VERY name of Mrs Humphry Ward suggested to subsequent generations an old-fashioned notion of the great and the good. Not only was she horn an Arnold hut great deal of charitable work. She was mildly satirised hy Aldous Huxley in Eyeless in Gozo as well as hy Ezra Pound: "And he talked about 'the Great Mary' / and said 'Mr Pound is shocked at my levity' When it turned out he meant Mrs Ward." He also paints her as an awesome personality meting out good to "her cripples". In fact Mrs Humphry Ward was practical rather than lofty.

She knew, for example, the ways in which committees work, they taught her that ideas were only interesting in terms of the way in which they were talked about or otherwise connected to the wider world. Her attitude towards them was as equivocal as her attitude towards society:

Lady Barbara was a committee woman, indefatigable and indis-criminate. She lived and gloried in a chronic state of overwork for which no one but herself saw the necessity. (The Mating of Lydia)

The problem is that this portentous reputation also clings to her novels. This is a pity. And it is also completely inaccurate. As a result all the novels that were so admired hy Henry James remain out of print.

early and for the wrong reason. Her first book. Robert Elsmere. was published in 1888. It was reviewed earnestly and at length she actually did carry out a by W.E. Gladstone, who dwelt almost exclusively on the philosophical argument. The book deals with enlightened doubt, with the question of the extent to which morality and spirituality can be separated from the Christian faith. It is a novel of ideas rather than a good novel. Its fame dominated Mrs Ward's subsequent reputation so that even her lightness of touch was read as if she were still as weighty, and as faintly ridiculous, as in this book.

> Humphry Ward wrote from Lady Rose's Doughter in 1903 to Eltham House in 1915 are ironic and acute satires on Edwardian society. They analyse not political ideas but the way that people use and manipulate them. They trace the decay of the landed families and their political influence. They delineate difficulties in relationships, especially in marriage. Even though she took on the propriety of her hushand's name, her actual view of intimate relationships remained sharp and bleak.

The novels that Mrs

Mrs Ward analyses the way in which ideas depend on personal relationships, and the way that politics depends on personal ambition. She depicts £15.99)

the fate of ooe too famous too risies that keep society intact: Lady Grossville made no excuses for her own sex. But she was a suf-ficiently ambitious hostess to know that agreeable parties are not coostructed out of the saints alone. The men therefore must provide the sinners; and of some of the persons then most in vogue she was careful not to know too much.

Mrs Humphry Ward reflects the "necessary" social hypoc-

The Corystone Family! Unhappy marriage is not a rare gesture in Mrs Ward's novels; heroines marry an unsatisfactory man more often than not, in a society in which little could be done about it, not that she believed in divorce. She is one of the earliest novelists consistently to explore the deterioration of a marriage because of unsuitability of temperament. Daphne, ostensibly about divorce, is really about a selfish, limited woman and an

indulgent, stupid man. Whilst Mrs Humphry Ward's novels are out of print they are still widely available in second-hand bookshops, not only in Hay-on-Wye. Several deserve to be reprinted hut first it must be recognised that what she offers is not like Robert Elsmere. She offers irony lightness of touch and intelligent analysis. It is no wonder that Henry Jamea admired her.

Cedric Cullingford is the outhor of 'Children's Literature and its Effects' (Cassell

Post Gazette announcements to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, telephone 0171-293 2012 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2011) or fax to 0171-293 2010. Please give a daytime telephone number.

America the beautiful

No more Britpop in '98. Not many Australian soap stars either. As for 'distaff distorto grunge-victims', well, they've seen better days. No, 1998 was the year in which American pop began a heady renaissance. The evidence? Our critics' choice of 10 CDs of the year



BECK Mutations

PERHAPS THIS year's most intriguing development has been the end of the assumption that musical innovation will automatically originate on the dance floor. Not that stadium behemoths will ever stop seeking vindication in the fairy dust of an over-priced remix, hut an increasing volume of traffic is now moving the other way, as horny-handed beat-farmers come down from the hills in an urgent quest for old school rock charisma. It's a manor of which Beck is undisputed boss, and his Mutations - supposedly just a hit of fun with his touring band while gearing up for a "proper" next album - is a gleaming monument to its diverse possibilities. Owing as much to The Beatles' Revolver as The Beasties' Poul's Boutique, these are space-age bachelor-pad cowboy laments of transcendent and enduring quality. Honourable mentions to Air's Moon Safhri (Virgin), and Glaswegian Arab Strap's rumbustious Philophobia (Chemikal Underground).



THIS ONE threw us for a loop. The

BEN THOMPSON

flame-haired temptress with a million voices in her head spoke in her own on Choirgirl, an unleashed, autobiographical affair. Cathartic release could he due to the fact that Tori's no longer a relationship-damaged waif, but a smugly happy wife. With that in the mix, a side we hadn't seen roared kaleidoscopically off the disc. Bashing her Bosendorfer alongside heavy hass and electric guitar, Tori went Led Zep. Elsewhere, we had references to Jackle Kennedy, David Cassidy, Pandora and Persephone - Amos was this year's chart-topping goddess.

Other contenders? Almost alone, Polly Harvey carried the flag for distaff distorto-grunge victims. Is This Desire? (Island) reached uncharted territory, so far west of Yeovil, It seemed located in America's desert badlands. Lucinda Williams's Cnr Wheels on n Gravel Road (Mercury) took a more rural American route, her sweet folk voice telling us of the heat and dust, the beat-up and broken-down.

GLYN BROWN



Moon Safari

THE PRAISE heaped upon Air is as much a result of their repair job on French music as the fact that they have produced the most bewitching retro-futuristic album of the year. They have often been aligned with the clattering vibrations of their compatriots, Daft Punk, hut, in truth, they couldn't be further apart. Moon Snfari is an otherworldly foray into some of the more tender moments of the last three decades. "Kelly Watch the Stars" and "Sexy Boy" epitomise Air's sound: soothing Serge Gainsbourg-style vocals, processed through a vocoder and set against Seventies' funk-jazz and Eighties' synth pop soundscapes. Smart and fluffy. unlifting and melancholy.

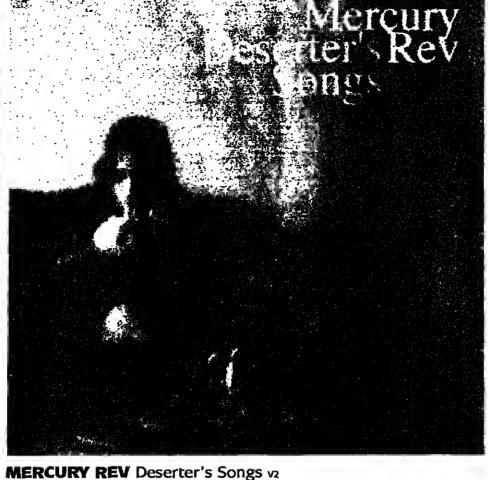
If I had to choose an album to accompany a stroll on the moon, it would indeed be this one. For more smart retro-futurism and vocoder wizardry, listen to the Beastie Boys' Hello Nasty (Grand Royal) and Bran Van 300's chaotic, self-titled début album (Capitol).

FIONA STURGES



HERO Two Pages

THIS YEAR saw the various genres of the UK dance scene in nostalgic mood. Such a climate even touched the futureobsessed drum'n'bass scene, most engagingly in the case of the breakbeat scientists, 4 Hero. In Two Pages they crafted an album which updates the classic soul of Marvin Gaye's Whot's Going On and Stevie Wonder's Innervisions with Detroit techno-inspired drum'n'bass. True, the album's inspirations are all drawn from the past, yet the duo rarely overdo the nostalgic reverie bit. They take their source material and contort it through a vibrant fusion of technology and imagination. Similarly inspiring were Jurassic 5 and Faithless. The former's hrilliant eponymous album (Pan PIAS: combines the word play of old skool hip hop with new skool turntablism. Faithless fused classic UK house, the moodiness of Massive Attack and the energy of Motown to create the unique sound of their stunning second album, Sunday 8pm (Cheeky).



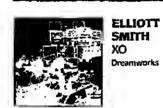
IN A year during which forward motion seemed for the most part stalled, bands continued to trawl through previous eras in search of inspiration, none more successfully than Mercury Rev. This was no simple Weller-style retro-rock appropriation, however. The heartbreakingly beautiful Deserter's Songs used halfremembered hints of old melodies or arrangements as poignant sepla-tint coloration for songs concerned, in part, with the very nature of recollection and reflection. It's an extraordinarily

emotional record, somehow managing to sound both melancholic and euphoric, suggesting that for Mercury Rev the past is a much more complex, ambivalent territory than that encountered in, say, Oasis's cheery celebrations of old ways.

In this respect, Deserter's Songs is more representative of the current wave of American retro-rockers than of its British equivalent. For unlike the second-hand sound-stylists of Britpop, such bands as Sparklehorse, Lambchop and The Jon

Spencer Blues Explosion, and such solo artists as Beck and Gillian Welch, are all inspired as much by the pioneer nature of older music forms as they are hy the music itself. The immediate result has been a succession of graceful, exploratory albums, whose appeal grows, rather than diminishes, with familiarity. Honourable mentions also go to Sparklehorse's Good Morning Spider (Parlophone) and Lambchop's What

ANDY GILL



SMITH

OF THE four Elliott Smith albums released in Britain in 1998, XO was the last, and by some distance, the best. Smith's hazy lyricism and lazy vocal were the key factors in a marvellous, gentle record. He has a knack for crafting obtuse, beguiling character sketches

and embedding them in the memory with expertly deployed one-liners: "They took your life apart/And called your failures art" might he a lament for every consumptive singer-songwriter who has preceded him.

Smith is, of course, an obvious heir to a lineage that includes Boh Dylan, Paul Simon, Elvis Costello and Kurt Cobain, but he's also the hrightest of a new hunch of unfairly disregarded American songwriters. Conventional wisdom seems to be that American rock died with

Cobain. In truth, it's quite healthy - it just doesn't sound that way. Along with Ben Folds, E of Eels and Mark Linklous of Sparklehorse, Smith has taken the familiar grunge themes of dislocation and alienation and examined them from a more reflective, less histrionic, and far less self-abasing perspective. XO is a masterpiece. Honourable

mentions should also go to

Svider and Eels' gloomy

Sparklehorse's Good Morning

Another Man Spills (City

Electro-Shock Blues. ANDREW MUELLER



Step Inside This House

TEN YEARS ago this sort of thing was called New Country. New Country wore a cowboy hat, not with irony but with contingent pride; it cleaved to Country idioms but aligned itself intellectually with the world beyond Nashville's moral catchment; it was neat and tidy on the outside, but scruffy in its soul. Now it's a supporting leg of the coffee-table mainstream - not alt.country but art-country: currently white American pop's most sophisticated property.

Lovett will politely concede that, if nothing else, this doublelength collection of other Texans' songs enables him to duck questions about whether he's still boiling his head over Julia, What we must concede is that this is the most playable length-and-line art-country record there's been. by a man. Texas sounds like a real place for once, inhabited by real people. You should also hear Emmylon Harris's elegant Spyboy (Grapevine) and Gillian Welch's grim Hell Among the Yearlings (Almo Sounds).

MILES DAVIS Complete Bitches **Brew Sessions**

THE IMPULSE! label is all-round jazz re-issue champ for 1998. It's given stylish new life to its Coltrane back catalogue and is now embarked on the noble project of revivifying the late-Sixties/ Seventies New Thing, as if it were indeed a new thing.

However, the label responsible for the single most impressive re-con job of the year is Sony's Columbia Legacy imprint. Their orgiastic slobber over Miles Davis's Bitches Brew sessions was profoundly worthy, not merely for its textured cardboard and aluminium finish. certainly not for the accompanying rubric, but for the complex loveliness of the music itself, which benefits hugely from being remastered to perfection and then laid out schematically over the length of four CDs as if it were, indeed, all part of the same musical continuum. Honourable mentions go to Coltrane's The Complete Classic Quartets (Impulse!) and Tina Brooks's heartbreaking Back to the Tracks (Blue Note). NICK COLEMAN

ARTISTS The Volce of

A SURVEY of the traditional music of these islands ought to be an impressive affair. It ought to be grave, monumental, desiccated, worthy, unlistenable; it should chafe in its unwearable work boots. In fact, Reg Hall and Tony Engle's epic, 20-volume Voice of the People "anthology" is a delight: it is monumental and to a large extent grave, for sure, but it is also moving, involving and enlightening, and, like all the best narratives, keeps you wanting to find out what happens next. Also, you don't have to fork out 300 fat ones for the privilege of owning the whole thing in a boxed set; you huy it piecemeal or you don't huy it at all.

This has been a good year for tradition-driven music, both here and in the States. Here, Eliza Carthy deservedly got on the Mercury shortlist for her imaginatively worldly Red Rice double album, while dad Martin made a splendid comeback of his own with Signs of Life. (No compensation, though, for the loss of Lai Waterson.)

NICK COLEMAN



NICK COLEMAN

MARCOTULLI The Woman Next Door

EVEN WHEN a musician goes into the studio and records his or her current live set, a context of sorts still emerges according to the dominant mood, texture or tempo of the event. But when the setting of the context precedes the recording, we can end up with an album as complete, as satisfying, and as profound as The Woman Next Door by the Italian pianist Rita Marcotulli. Inspired by the films of François Truffaut, Marcotull has written a suite of tunes that relate to different themes or characters, and then cast them for various permutations of a large ensemble. The result is wide-ranging music held together by the central concept and recurring motifs. It works as a whole in a way that very few jazz albums ever manage to do.

Two other albums of governed mood: the American pianist Brac Mehldau's Songs (Warner Bros), and the veteran soul-jazz vocalist Terry Callier's Timepeace (Talkin' Loud/Verve).

PHIL JOHNSON

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Nothing more than this? Depends what you mean

LEONARD BERNSTEIN'S Condide.

That's how the London Symphony feeling for the political agenda than she did for the musical comedy, and nod here, a little Rossini or Verdi Orchestra billed it here - presumably because listing all its collaborators on the title page of the programme would have left little room for anything else. Too many cooks spoiled the book. That is what see it work in the theatre, though happened to Candide, the musical. In the best of all possible worlds, it might just have worked: Voltaire's lit-spring - are plainly optimistic. So tle novella turned very big operetta. But Lillian Hellman - who provided

subsequent rescue operations only added to the confusion. To quote one of its songs: "Words, Words, Words". No doubt about it, words have been the undoing of Candide. I've yet to Trevor Nunn and John Caird - who stage it at the National Theatre next was Candide, of course.

There remains, though, that the show's original book - had more score - a marvel of pith and pastiche

there, a lot of Gilbert and Sullivan everywhere. All of it cohesively melded through the wit and wisdom of Bernstein's own musical voice. Bernstein's music is Candide's music, always aspirational, always reaching for the octave and beyond.

Nine years ago, London's Barbican Hall jumped to Condide's tunes. Bernstein himself (in what was his last London engagement) couriered the conducted tour with a little help

CLASSICAL

CANDIDE BARBICAN LONDON

from Dr Pangloss, better known as his old sparring partner Adolph Green. This time around, Nickolas Grace - rather more dexterous. physically and verbally - did the honours, wryly understating the topicality of his updated narration. A little more pace might better have con-

veyed the whistle-stop nature of Voltaire's "picaresque" plotting, hut his energy was, at very least, infectious. Not so the lacklustre con-

ducting of Kent Nagano. If the syncopated home straight of the Overture is not somehow impatient for the fun, froth, and frolic to come, then the chances are it's not going to be there. It wasn't. Neither was Nagano. Tempi were plodding, rhythms lazy. This was a soufflé that never rose. The raucous flamenco

Easily Assimilated" is an invitation to join in the foot-stamping, brazen trumpets whacking out the offer you can't refuse. But for all Patricia Routledge's best efforts with the castanets, lift-off was postponed.

Routledge stole the show. Her comic timing put some of the zest back into it. So, too, dld Thomas Allen's deliciously sibilant Maximilian. Then there was the Jerry and June show - Jerry Hadley (Candide) and June Anderson (Cunégonde), climax of the Old Lady's Tango "I am sole survivors of the performances

from nearly a decade ago. Anderson still sports the dizzying E-flats, but not the irony that can make "Glitter and Be Gay" so killingly funny; Hadley is no longer quite so fresh-faced or fresh-voiced, not least in those idealistic and once honeyed ascents above the stave. But he means what he sings, and that in itself made the disillusionment of "Nothing More Than This" the most poignant of tributes to a composer who never really knew just how good he was. EDWARD SECKERSON

CLASSIFIED

MARTIN JAMES

Legal Notices

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AND IN THE MATTER OF THE NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Order of the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) dated 16th December 1908 confirming the cancellation of the Strate Premium Account of the above-named Company was registered by the Registrar of Companies on 18th December 1998.

Dated 21st December 1998 S. J. Berwin & Co. 222 Grays Int. Rend. London WC1X SHB Ref: 482/Me/193.25/CORP3:10717.1/smi Solicitors to the shore-named Company

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IN THE MATTER OF THE IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
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A dose of the winter blues

tour of South Pacific, Richard Rodgers reputedly broke up one of those smoke-filled late-

night production meetings where people agonise over what to adjust and fix. "Fellas." he announced, "this show is perfect. Let's go to hed." And now, nearly 50 years later, there are few who would want to dispute such a claim. It's a struggle to remind yourself of this, though, when confronted with a revival as ropy as that

ON THE first pre-Broadway

the Sheffield Crucible. The poster invites you to banish all your winter blues" with this masterly musical love story of an ageing cultured expatriate Frenchman and an unsophisticated young nurse from Arkansas who are thrown together during the war in the Pacific and almost come to

directed by Deborah Paige at

MUSICAL SOUTH PACIFIC SHEFFIELD CRUCIBLE

grief over the subject of race. Criss-crossed with duckboards, the Crucible's thrust stage certainly pushes the sun-kissed sea and sand into the audience's midst, with the undistinguished band visible at the hack. Introducing choreography to a show that originally was notable for dispensing with it. Peter Darling gives the engaging line-up of sexually frustrated GIs a horny hornpipe and, as "There is Nothing Like

sort of Half-Monty flourish. But there was so much coughing and spluttering in the theatre that you didn't know whether you were in an auditorium or a sanatorium. Some

a Dame" reaches its climax, a

to have infected the delectable Janie Dee, whose lanky, impish Nellie was in sadly enfeebled voice. When she failed to put full-throated rapture into the declaration "I'm in love with a wonderful guy". you tended to sympathise because Mark Adams's hectoringly sung Emile has none of the romantic reserve and mystery nec-

essary for this role.

of this local croakiness seems

Intermittently entertaining, the production is too often misjudged. I have always been a fervent supporter of colourhlind easting. But drama which turns on the question of colour and race constitutes an exception. Given that Nellie's distaste for the idea that Emile is the block in their romance, it

children who look as if they are of clearly different races as the offspring of that union, And while the black actor Cornell John is extremely winning as Luther Billis, the unit's comically unsuccessful would-be war profiteer, colour-hlind casting again raises problems. When he and Nellie perform "Honey-hun" at the Thanksgiving Follies - she as a male sailor and Luther as a dusky native maiden with coconuts for hreasts the fact that the number is a raucous travesty of another racially sensitive relationship in the show loses its sharpness if Luther is already a non-white. Some enchanted evening? No, some way short of that.

widower of a Polynesian A version of this review appeared in later editions of yesterday's paper makes little sense to cast two

PAUL TAYLOR



Shades of 'The Conversation': Will Smith and Gene Hackman take paranois into overdrive

Bugs, boys and big bangs

urveillance is fast becoming Hollywood's theme du jour. First The Truman Show dramatised the comical vet paragoid fantasy of a life unwittingly spent under the scrutiny of 5,000 concealed cameras. Then Brian De Palma, always a keenly voyeuristic director, explored the sinister new possibilities of surveillance technology in Snake Eues, which featured an aslonishing elevated tracking shot over a cross-section of hotel bedrooms part recording angel, part peeping Thomas Brian Reynolds (Jon Voight). Tom. Indeed, in a year when Bill Clinton has found his privacy impossible to defend, the conspiracy theorist's credo that Big Erother is watching us

feels increasingly plausible. In Tony Scott's new thriller Enemy of the State, paranola goes into overdrive. The lone is sel in the credit sequence, a hysterical montage of grainy swoops and zooms filmed from on high by panoptic spy satellites: here is the security state in action, we're Hing told, as street riots and rowdyhas are coldly monitored from above and swiftly quashed by the batonwielding authorities on the ground.

About to experience the full might of these digital thieves of liberty is a young DC labour lawyer, Robert Clayton Dean (Will Smith), who is buying his wife Christmas lingerie when an old college friend tears past him out of the shop and thence to an early grave, courtesy of a collision with a Mack truck. Unbeknown to Robert, his late friend slipped him a tape that captures the murder of a senior congressman by rogue forces in the National Security Agency.

The chief rogue in question is one who understandably wants to get his hands on the tape. He decides to make Robert the target of a smear campaign, sending in his spooks to bug the lawyer's whole wardrobe - pen, watch, cell phone, shoes, trousers - and then discredit his reputation. Soon enough, he finds his name splashed all over the newspapers as a philanderer his wife (Regina King) kicks him out of the house, and, horror of horrors, all his credit cards are mysteriously cancelled. In desperation be turns for help to an old girlfriend, Rachel (Lisa Bonet), acting as intermediary for the mysterious Brill, a former intelli-

1/ Shall We Dance?

Watch people's faces go

blank when you tell them

that the best film of 1998

But it's true! Recounting

film beautifully contrasts

the formality of Japanese

manners with the secret

yearning to cut a dash on

Norwegian Pal Sletaune's

debut is a blackish comedy about a shifty postman

named Roy who likes

involves himself in a

watch again.

insecurity and

pinching other people's

mail. By a combination of

nosiness and bad luck be

Hitchcockian nightmare of

only film this year I paid to

3/ In the Company of Men

A gripping and fantastically

unpleasant essay in male

competitiveness, Neil

upon two white-collar

a iaundiced look at

company men in

the Nineties, and

you fear it may be

4/ The Wings of

networkstoen of the

like the truth.

Inin Softley's

Henry James

novel is an

telling us something

LaBute's début focuses

executives who scheme to

avenge themselves on the

opposite sex. The film takes

stalking and hlackmail. The

the dance floor.

2/ Junk Mail

the tale of a melancholy

stiff who finds he's got rhythm, Masayuki Suo's

Japanese hallroom dancing.

was a comedy about

THE BIG PICTURE



ANTHONY QUINN

ENEMY OF THE STATE (15) DIRECTOR: TONY SCOTT STARRING: WILL SMITH, GENE HACKMAN, JON VOIGHT 128 MINS

gence operative who has gone underground. That he's played by Gene Hackman is both the film's trump card and a reminder of its source, namely Francis Ford Coppola's The Conversation (1974), in which Hackman played the surveillance genius Harry Caul. Brill is essentially Harry 25 years later, right down to the black spectacles and the wire-meshed lair

that's a pure homage to the opening scene of Coppola's film. The difference between the two

films, however, is conspicuous - and instructive. The Conversation was a thriller but was also a study in one man's spiritual desolation; Harry, a Catholic and a loner, is guilt-ridden by a bugging job he once did which resulted in a grisly double murder, compounding his obsession with privacy he won't let anythody near him. You can watch The Conversation over and over and still find some new detail each time. How you long for such nuance in Enemy of the State. Sure, there's a creepiness in its early stages as Robert gets sucked into the vortex of technological tyranny, and Will Smith, stripped to his underwear at one stage, does a good impersonation of

Yet the stamp of its makers - producer Jerry Bruckheimer and director Scott - inevitably begins to show through. For example, it's not enough that Brill and Robert simply flee their bolt-hole once the NSA locate its

full of bugging equipment. Just in whereabouts - no, their exit has to be case we miss the parallel, there's a followed by the huilding being blown tense rendezvous in a public square sky-high in a humungous explosion; a Bruckheimer special. The film becomes a sequence of chases, down a timnel, along railway sidings, across botel roofs, all set to the shuddering percussive soundtrack beloved of these steroid-packing action movies. All that's missing is the signature Bruckheimer shot of the leading characters walking abreast in slo-mo towards camera; fine if they're fighter pilots or astronauts, of course, but heroic group shots of leather-jacketed goons with ear-pieces and handguns might look a touch out of place.

Throughout, the editing has the frenetic, blink-and-it's-gone intensity of a trailer, as if a pause for thought would forfeit an audience's atten tion. This, I'm afraid, is what the Hollywood blockbuster has come to. Even when it alights on a potentially interesting idea, It basn't the wit or nerve to let character take precedence over speciacle - chases, fireball explosions, the full shooting match. Maybe this explains why so many movies are beginning to look like one another. Now there's a conspiracy for you.

ALSO SHOWING

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME VINCENT WARD (15) THE MIGHTY PETER CHELSOM (PG) THE APPLE SAMIRA MAKHMALBAF (PG)



special effects, Vincent Ward's What Dreams May Come looks like the most expensive therapy session ever put together. Robin Williams, at his most ingratiating, plays a paediatrician whose family is dogged by death. First the family Labrador has to be put down; then his two children are killed in an off-screen accident; then he buys the big one in a freeway car crash and fetches up in an afterlife based on the impressionist landscapes painted by his wife (Annabella Sciorra). Driven insane by bereavement, she has committed suicide and been consigned to hell, so Williams, with the help of celestial tour guides Cuba Gooding Jr and Max Von Sydow,

pheus to rescue her If any of the above has the whist of dung, you're definitely in the right neighbourhood. While the production design has a breathtaking depth of colour (complete with art history references to Monet and Caspar David Friedrich) the film sets the alarm bells ringing from the moment Williams and Sciorra meet on a Swiss lake and declare themselves soulmates. Once death moves in, it's cue for a two-hour sob-feast in which earnest New Age waffle is exchanged with such reverence you'd think it had been penned by Aristotle.

journeys downwards a la Or-

In fact, this is the work of Ron Bass, whose fondness for sentimental verbiage the also wrote Waiting to Exhale) made me wonder whether he hadn't missed his vocation in life as a Hallmark Card staff writer. Thought is real, physical is the illusion," somebody remarks. I wish that were true, then I could simply have "thought" I'd seen What Dreams May Come, and skipped the "physical" experience of its butt-numbing

More mystical whimsy in tale of two boys who don't fit in. Baring Day

LOADED WITH state-of-the-art Max (Elden Henson) is a teenage giant and a slow learner; Kevin (Kieran Culkin) is a pintsized intellectual with a degenerative disease. After their friendship is cemented by a shared regard for the legend of King Arthur, Max decides they'd work better in tandem and carries Kevin on his shoulders. Together they wow the basketball team, face off the school bullies and deal with the unwelcome return to the neighbourhood of Max's jailbird father. With an A-list cast in minor roles - Sharon Stone. Gena Rowlands, Harry Dean Stanton, Gillian Anderson - the film has its moments, but it does rather beg for our tears when a more softly-softly approach is required. You detect the Blackpool-horn director straining in offbeat directions which the American schmaltz of The Mighty simply can't

accommodate. The Apple is a peculiar first feature by Samira Makhmalbaf, 17-year-old daughter of Mohsen Makhmalbaf, the Iranian filmmaker. It recounts the true story, using the real family involved, of two innocent 12-yearold sisters who have been hidden from the world since hirth. After neighbours complain to the authorities, a social worker (they have them in Tehran too! turns up at their home and forces their ancient. needy father to let them out. His reason for keeping them locked up: "My daughters are like flowers. They mustn't be exposed to the star or they would soon fade." Dads. eh? The film's gentle humour comes to the fore once the girls are let munch apples, though concentration is vital for the film's leisurely pace to work. Once you've overcome somnolence, Makhinalbaf's inquiry into family life casts a weird spell.

Peter Chelsom's The Mighty, a All films ore on release from

"THIS CAPTIVATING DRAMA IS

IN SATURDAY'S WEEKEND REVIEW

The black swan

Nadine Meisner meets Carlos Acosta, a new dance sensation



CRITIC'S CHOICE: THE TEN BEST FILMS OF 1998



The Truman Show



'The Big Lebowski'

extremely rare bird: a costume drama that values psychological complexity and emotional depth above the period props and folderol. It's not James, nor could it ever be, but it's certainly the most tragic exploration of answered prayers I saw all year.

5/ The Big Lebowski Jeff Bridges plays "the Dude", a slightly dopey, mild-mannered dropout, who crosses a paths with a crippled hillionaire and suddenly finds his life in danger -10 short, it's

shaggy dog



In the Company of Men



up a scenario notable for its off-centre wit and complete absence of meaning. 6/ The Daytrippers One of the best independent films to come out of

Brothers, who've dreamed

story from the Coen

America this year, Greg Mottola's delightful comedy about a family outing to Manhattan contained wintry humour, poignant truths and the world's shortest car chase.

7/ The Spanish Prisoner David Mamet returns to the intricate layering of hluff and counter-bluff he finessed in his first movie. House of Games, ed. couched in that distinctively ever halting, rhetorical dialogue.



Campbell Scott, the most underrated young actor in

America, turns in a sterling

performance as the duped

nice guy. 8/ Antz (below) Given his recent run of indifferent movies, this computer-animated comedy did at least remind us that Woody Allen is still capable of great timing. albeit in the guise of a worker ant.

Top-drawer cast, blissfully funny script, and some spookiest animation Note II

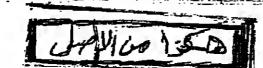
9/ The Truman Show Perhaps not as great as some made it out to be, Peter Weir's satire on our enslavement to television was nevertheless an inspired and ingenious piece of movie-making: Jim Carrey also seized the opportunity to show he's a lot more more than an irritating rubber-faced contortionist.

10/ Zero Effect Uh? Don't worry; hardly anyone else saw this small, but engagingly droll comedy, directed by firsttimer Jake Kasdan (son of The Big Chill Lawrence). Starring Bill Pullman as a wigged-out private eye and Ben Stiller as his sidekick, it had the affable charm and modest intentions of a good TV pilot

Turkey of the Year Henry Jagiom's Déjà Vu, an improvised ensemble drama, was probably the most excruciating experience of the cinema year. His characters are the kind of awful chattering pseuds Woody Allen was satirising around 20 years ago, yet Jaglom for some bizarre reason takes them completely seriously. One nonsensical speech by Vanessa Redgrave concluded with the exhortation to "jump off the cliff of life", an

> I would have willingly helped the whole cast fulfil.





CHRISTMAS DAY TELEVISION & RADIO

BBC1

7.45 Scrooge Koala's Christmas (8899212), **8.10** Alvin and the Chipmunks (4716941). 8.35 To Me.. to You (8270038), 9.00 Rotten Ralph (27835). 9.30 Teletubbies (46458). 10.00 Celebrate Christmas with Deborah McAndrew (16380). 11.00 FILM: Miracle on 34th Street (44162699). 12.50 Top of the Pops (8684477). 1.50 News; Weather (79556583). 1.55 The Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show (5055729). 3.00 The Queen (1857854). 3.10 Noel's Christmas Presents (5699980). 4.10 Animal Hospital (7007854), 4.45 The First Snow of Winter (160767). 5.15 News; Weather (2017670). 5.25 EestEnders (8721038).

5.55 Auntia's Spanking New Bloomers. Terry Wogan introduces a festive selection of out-takes and clipe (S) (T) (930496).

6.30 Changing Rooms Christmas Special. Carol Smillie and the teem travel to the Scottish isle of Arran (S) (T) (816).

7.00 [H:[1][H= Babe (Chris Noonan 1995 Aus). Talking pig's bacon is saved by talking sheepdog. See Film of the Day, below (S) (T) (51187).

8.30 EastEnders. Biance and Grant put aside their differences just as Grant's prospects take e dip (S) (T) (2477).

9.00 Before They Were Famous III. Samantha Janus, Leonardo DiCaprio and Robson Green ere among the then unknowns (242670).

9.40 News; Weather (1) (281477).

9.50 CHOICE Men Behaving Badly. The three-part Christmes special starts here. See Comedy of the Day. below (S) (T) (541854).

10.35 They Think It's All Over. Guests are Jonathan Ross, Phil Comwell and Colin Montgomerie (S) (T) (848564).

11.10 A Many Splintered Thing (S) (102372), 11.40 The People's Nativity (808941). 11.45 Robbie Williams -For One Night Only (S) (T) (539699).

12.35 FILM Carry On Girls (Gerald Thomas 1973 UK), Sid James holds a beauty contest and the feminists complain. Those were the days (Then Weather) (T) 17398336). To 2.05am.

BBC2

6.15 FILM: The Great Lie (90854), 8.00 FILM: The Treasure of the Sierra Madre (97767). 10.00 Oil Get off Our Train (90854). 10.30 The World of Peter Rabbit and Friends (9795800). 10.55 Here's Looking at You: 75 Years of Warner Bros (3730835). 11.45 FB.M: Dodge City (15389941). 1.25 Gogs (58824106). 1.55 Big Hug; the Story of Teletubbies (9349-596), 2.35 Rex the Runt (1425903), 2.45 The Simpsons (6380470).

3.10 EliM Casablanca (Michael Curtiz 1942 US). You must remember this... (T) (51904485).

4.50 Choir of the Year (8331361).

5.30 Nutcracker Sweeties (919903).

6.05 Twelfth Night (Trevor Nunn 1996 UK). Assured, strongly cast version of Shakespeare's seasonal comedy about a shipwreck which separatee identical twins: With Helena Bonham Carter (Olivia), Imogen Stubbs (Viola), Nigel Hawthome (Malvolio), Richard E Grant, Ben Kingsley, Mel Smith, Imelda Staunton and Steve Mackintosh (S) (T) (70058922).

8.15 Close Up. Documentary exploring the life and literary achievements of Ted Hughes, who died in October. Seamus Heaney, Diana Rigg, Tom Paulin and John Carey come bearing plaudits (S) (T) (620583).

9.05 E:(1)(23 Arena: The Brian Epstein Story. The first half of a two-part profile of the man who moulded The Beatles. See Profile of the Day, below (S) (T) (7548583).

10.20 The Queen (S) (503496).

10.30 Dance Lexie Dance (R) (602309)

10.45 Immortal Beloved (Bernard Rose 1994 UK). Dramatisation of the life of Beethoven, and the story of e quest to uncover the identity of the composer's mysterious "immortal beloved" after his death. With Gary Oldman (1) (664748).

12.45 Prick Up Your Ears (Stephen Frears 1987 UK), Garv Oldman again, this time as playwright Joe Orton (Then Weather) (507688). To 2.35am.

ITV Carlton

6.00 GMTV (1936309). 9.25 Christmas Day in the Morning (S) (T) (1815583).

10.20 Children's ITV: Scoty and Co Christmas Special (T) (2962187). 11.00 Percy the Park Keeper (R) (2750651). 11.35 The Forgotten Toys (R) (S) (9811564). 12.05 The Willows in Winter (R) (S) (T) (7944583). 1.30 News; Weather (T) (45083545). 1.45 The Spice Girls Live at Wembley (S) (T) (4083458). 3.00 The Queen (T) (1842922). 3.10 Christmas Disney Time (1) (3899906). 4.10 Jack and the Beanstalk (S) (T) (79320854).

5.45 ITN News; Weather (T) (206019).

6.00 Emmerdale. The Dingles get a Christmas miracle, while the Windsors must endure tragedy (S) (T) (43361).

7.00 Coronation Street. The Street raties round as Jack and Vera stage e sit-in. Judy gives birth (T) (1458).

8.00 You've Been Framed at Christmas. Lisa Riley heads to the Arctic Circle (T) (8038).

8.30 Who Wants to be a Christmas Millionaire? Chris Tarrant presents the quiz show in which contestants attempt to give 15 correct answers to win the top prize of £1 million (1)

9.30 Christmases from Hell, Chaos at the school nativity play, revels turning into riots, malls gridlocked by frantic shoppers end an elephant upending Santa's sleigh (S) (T) (44106).

10.30 ITN News; Weather (T) (608583).

10.40 The Godfather Part II (Francis Ford Coppola 1974 US). Coppola's sequel which extended and surpassed the original. An epic about the corruption of America, starring Al Pacino, Robert De Niro. Talia Shire, Robert Duvall and Diane Keaton (T) (84440125).

2.20 Shout at the Devil (Peter Hunt 1976 UK). Lee Marvin and Roger Moore star in this Wilbur Smith yam set in Mozambique during the Great War (67537591). To 4.45am.

Channel 4

7.00 For Better or for Worse (31699). 7.30 Max Bear's Christmas (10106). 8.00 The Big Breakfast (37497699). 9.55 FILM: Swallows and Amazons (94001361). **11.40** Bills New Frock (1087496). 12.15 Famous Fred (R) (274309), 12.45 Father Christmas (266380). 1.15 FILM: Tom Thumb (T) (34687941). 3.00 Alternative Christmas Message (1840564).

310 The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery (Frank Launder, Sidney Gillat 1966 UK). Not the old Alastair Sim originals but with Frankle Howerd and Reg Varney (63609813).

4.50 Countdown Grand Final (S) (T) (1205212). 5.35 Gilbert and Suffivan (922545). 5.55 The Queen (627926).

6.05 Hansel and Gretel. The Welsh National Opera's colourful production of Englebert Humperdinck's opera based on the Brothers Grimm fairv tale. Directed by Richard Jones, the opera is sung in English with Imelda Drumm as Hansel and Linda Kitchen as Gretel. The orchestra is conducted by Władimir Jurowski (T) (75343309).

8.00 Bernstein. Two-part biographical documentary about the conductor and composer. It traces his rise to fame from his electrifying debut in 1943 with the New York Philharmonic. to his final performance at the fall of the Berlin Wall (T) (8748).

9.00 Remember Me? (Nick Hurran 1996 US). One of two Michael Frayn comedies on at the moment (the other is Noises Off on Channel 5). Rik Mayall and Imelda Staunton star as e couple caught in e stale suburban marriage who are caught somewhat off-guard when an old flame of Staumton's (played by Robert Lindsay) turns up on their doorstep (T) (75499019).

10.35 TIM The Omen (Richard Donner 1976 US), Dial 666 for wellworn Satanic hijinks staring Gregory Peck, Lee Remick, David Warner and Harvey Stevens as little Damlen (51098941).

12.40 The Fly (Kurt Neumann 1958 US). The original version, starring Vincent Price (1) (786268).

2.15 The Return of the Fly (Edward Bernds 1959 US). Sequel to the ebove, again with Vincent Price (566539), To 3.45am,

Channel 5

6.00 The Wind in the Willows (R) (25730477), 6.25 Rooberb (37227583), **6.30** Dappledown Farm (R) (44tt380). 7.00 Wimzle's House (R) (6854767). 7.30 Milkshake! (2493767). 7.35 Havakazoo (6058670). 8.00 George of the Jungle (R) (7469922). 8.30 What-a-Mess (7468293). 9.00 Loggerheads (7459545). 9.30 USA High (4868019). 9.50 Alpha Zone Christmas Special (6999941). 10.20 The Revelation Game (S) (9306854). 10.50 FILM: Scrooge - A Christmas Carol (25057800). 12.30 Family Affairs (2090019). 1.00 Michael Flatley Talking with Sir David Frost (S) (T) (42755980). 2.05 FiLM: Major Barbara (9067380). 4.05 FBLM: Calamity Jane (11200564).

6.00 5 News Update (6286941).

6.05 Performance: Bryn Terfel. The Welsh baritone Brym Terfel in concert In Edinburgh (7320467).

6.35 Family Affairs. Christmas Day with the Harts (S) (T) (6749699).

7.05 Night Fever. Suggs hosts the karaoke entertainment show, with Philippa Forrester, Sam Kane, Kirsten O'Brien, Russell Boulter, Heather Pearce, Norman Pace, Tricla Penrosa, John Altman, Sarah Matravers and Aled Jones (8824794).

8.00 Fort Boyard. Melinda Messenger presents the action-adventure game show set in a remote Napoleonic fortress off the north-west coast of France (S) (T) (6439293).

9.00 FILM Noises Off (Peter Bogdanovich 1992 US). Thoroughly disappointing movie version of Michael Frayn's stage farce about e troupe of actors touring the States with a sex comedy. A shame really, because e first-rate cast could have really done something with the material if it had been better "opened out". With Carol Burnett, Michael Caine, Denholm Elliott, Julie Hagerty and Christopher Reeve (S) (T) (38510309L

10.5S Melinda's Big Night In. Guests include Jamie Theakston (S) (2725106).

11.35 Vixen (Russ Meyer 1969 US). Big-breasted kitsch (8786580).

12.55 Hickey and Boggs (Robert Culp 1972 US). Crime drama with Bill Cosby (2988862).

2.55 Sweet Hostage (Lee Philips 1975 US). Drama. To 4.40am.

ITV/Regions

ANGLIA 6.00 GMTV (1936309). 9.25 6.00 GMTV (1936309), 9.25 Ciristmas Day in the Morning (191583), 10.20 Sooty and Co Christmas Special (2962187), 11.00 Percy the Park Keeper (2750651), 11.35 The Forgotten Toys (9811564), 12.05 The Willows in Writer (7944583), 1.45 The Spice Girls Live at Wembley (4083458), 3.00 The Queen (1842922), 3.10 Christmas Disney Time (3899908). The Queen (1842922), 3.10
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4.40 Jack and the Beanstalk
(79320854), 8.00 Emmerdale
(43361), 7.00 Coronation Street
(1458), 8.00 You've Been Framed at
Christmas (8038), 8.30 Who Wants
to be a Christmas Milionaire?
(82903), 9.30 Christmases from
Hei (44105), 10.40 Film: The
Godfather Part II (84440125), 2.20
Film: Shout at the Devil (67537591),
4.45 Movie Magic (2465510), 5.35
Cartoons (3501846), 5.55 - 6.00
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Cartoons (350/846), 8-35 - 4-36
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4.45 Movie Megic (2465510). 5.35
Cartoons (350/846).

As Channel 4 except: 11.40 The Bear (17269361). 12.40 Planed Plant (87427187). 3.00 The Queen's Christmas Message (57217699), 3.10 Planed Plant (63488019), 5.15 Countdown (88984767), 6.00 Nawyddion (8762854), 6.10 Bryn Terfel Yng Nghastell Caemarion (29079699), 740 Pobol y Cwm (2537831), 8.45 Ma' Han 'Ma Nadolig 34039125). 9.00 Film; Cameleon (31890670). **11.05** Father Ted Xmas Special (88937318). **12.10** Rising Damp (83302220). **3.45** Close. ALL OTHER ITY REGIONS

54C

COMEDY OF THE DAY

MEN BEHAVING BADLY (950pm BBC1, nant) Those who thought Seinfeld was being daring wheo it broached the subject of masturbation will be gob smecked by this three-part Christmas special featuring Simon Nye's ageing lads. Gary and Dorothy are trying for a baby, but Gary can't oblige. Enter a pile of sex videos and jokes on the aforementioned topic. Not one to watch with Auntie Ethel, then,



PROFILE OF THE DAY

ARENA: THE BRIAN EPSTEIN STORY (9.05pm BBC2, right) Paul McCartney. Marianne Faithfull and George Martin are among those sharing their memories of the Svengali-like figure behind the emerging Beatles. Epstein was gay at a time when homosexuality was still in the closet, and this handsome, richly evocative film follows him from his shopkeeping roots in Liverpool to his brokering of the Sixties.

Dench reads 'The Snow

Queen' by Hans Christ-

11.00 The Modern Magi

The second of two pro-grammes in which three

modern magi retrace the steps taken almost 2,000



FILM OF THE DAY

BABE (7pm BBC1, right) Though it sounds like an awful bleod of talking-animal whimsy and fashionable animal-rights diatribe, this animatronics fantasy is insidiously seductive. Babe is a piglet saved from a factory farm existence by smallholder James Cromwell - but is still destined for the Christmas dinner table. His bacon is saved by a sheepdog (voiced by Miriam Margolyes) and an aged ewe. But only if he can herd sheep.



SATELLITE & CABLE

RADIO 1 rable concerts of the 1998 BBC Proms season 97.6-99.8MHz FM) at the Royal Albert Hall, London. 5: Prom 20, 9.00 Zoe Balls Christ mas Breakfast, 12.00 Clive Warren. 2.00 A given on 1 August, brought Gershwin's ever-TOTP Christmas. 4.00 green folk opera 'Porgy and Bess' to the festival Chris Moyles's Alternative Christmas. 11.00 West-

for the first time, in his centenary year, its story wood, 2.00 Fabio and Grooverider. 4.00 -7.00 Envna B. of human asokations provides a vivid political RADIO 2 parable for our times. Gershwin: Porgy and Bess, Willard White, bass 6.00 Roger Royle. 8.00 Good Morning Christ-mas. 10.00 Terry Wogan's Christmas Spe-(Porgy), Cynthia Hay-Wogan's Christmas Spicial. 11.00 Ken Bruce. 2.00 The Monkhouse Archive Christmas Stock ings. 2.30 The News Huddines Christmas Special 3.00 The Oueen, 3.10 Ed Ste 5.00 Christmas with Celme. 8.00 Pavarotti in Conversation with Paul Gambaccini. 7.00

Hubert Gregg. 8.00 Christmas at Bath Abbey 9.15 Alan Freeman: Their Greatest Christmas Bits. 10.15 Listen to the Band: a Fenfare for Christmas. 11.00 Peace on Earth. 12.00 Lynn Parsons. 4.00 - 6.00 Lata Sharma. RADIO 3 (90.2-924MHz FM) 6.00 On Air. 9.00 Mesterworks.

10.30 Artist of the 12.00 Composer of the **1.00** The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert. Lessons end Carois. 3.40 In Terra Pax. (R) 4.00 Dival. 4.45 Music to Die For.

5.00 A Medieval Christ-5.30 Music Rooms. 6.00 Discovering Music with Leonard Slatkin. 7.00 Christmas Cock-7.30 Performance on 3.

ten of the most memo-

mon, soprano (Bess), Bournemouth Symphony Chorus, BBC Singers, BBC Concert Orchestra/Wayne Marshall (R) 10.50 Postscript. Come dian and broadcaster Rainer Hersch presents five personal and idio-syncratic studies of the music of our century, 5: We'll Sort It Out in the Edit'. Rainer Hersch pon made of the recording industry and what the recording industry has made of us.

11.10 Schumann.

11.30 And His Mother 12.00 Composer of the Week: Bach. (R) 1.00 - 6.00 Through RADIO 4 (924-946MHz FM) 6,00 NEWS; Something 7.00 NEWS; Open Country. 8.00 Joy to the World. 9.00 NEWS; Christmas Morning Service. 10.00 NEWS; Desert Island Discs Special. 10.45 Under One Roof. 11.00 Christmas Panto. 12.00 NEWS; News; Shipping Forecast. 12.04 Im Sorry I Haven't a Clue Christ-12.30 Screen Test. 12.57 Weather. 1.00 The World at One. 1.02 Derek Cooper's Christmas Lunch

2.15 The Gemini Apes 3.45 Colonel Clay Master of Disguise 4.00 NEWS; The 4.10 With Pleasure at

RADIO

5.00 A Night with the Owls. (R) 5.25 Life on Christmas 8.00 Six O'Clock News. 6.05 I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue Christmas 6.30 News Quiz of the 7.00 NEWS; The

7:15 Front Row. Mark Lawson and Francine Stock unwrap e selection of spectacular hits and disastrous flops from the arts over the past year 7.45 Under One Root. Concluding the first of three five-part dramatic tions from the Michele Hanson stories. With Janet Maw, Edna Dore and Luisa Bradshaw-White, 8.00 NEWS; Correspon-

dents Look Ahead. Senior BBC correspondents from around the world join Alex Brodie for e look ahead to 1999 dominate the airwaves 8.45 Letter from America. Alistair Cooke with another slice of Ameri-

9.00 NEWS; Christmas Panto. 'Cinderella and Her Very Ugly Sisters' by Stewart Permutt and Debbie Barham, The shocking story of Cinchallenged sisters is 10.00 NEWS: With Pleasure at Christmas.

Sue MacGregor selects her favourite pieces of

10.45 Book at Bedtime

Five stars read their cho-sen seasonal tale. 5: Judi

Chosen for Christmas.

prose end poetry.

years ago. As they epproach the place of Christ's birth, Rowan Williams, Bishop of Monmouth. Profes Heather Couper, astronomer, and Paul dent ask; who is the child the modern age seeks, and what are the signs to follow? (R) 11.30 Revealed Lives. 11.45 Christmas Night 12.00 Life on Christmas 12.30 The Late Book: Out of Her Senses. 12.48 Shipping 1.00 As World Service. 5.30 World News. 5.56 - 6.00 Weather RADIO 4 LW (198kHz) 12.00 - 7.00 Test Match Special. RADIO 5 LIVE 7.00 Breakfast. 9.00 Sportscall 10.00 The Best of

5.35 Shipping Forecast. 5.40 Inshore Forecast. (693, 909kHz MW) 6.00 The Life and Death of Belfast Celtic. (R) Camobell 12.00 Spotlight 98. 1.00 Up All Night - All Day. 4.00 The Best of Ruscoe and Co. 6.00 Gadget Special 7.00 A-Z of Entertain-8.00 A Green Christ-mas. Alan Green settles back with a host of celebrity guests to reflect on the highs and lows of

the sporting year. 9.00 Brief Lives. 5 Live's

obituary column. 10.00 20th-Century Vox

the family has meant to different generations. 1L00 Late Night Live. Insight and comment on the day's big Issues with Brian Hayes, including Papertalik, 10.30 Sport, 11.00 News, 11.15 The Financial World Tanight, 1.00 Up Al Night, 4.00 Extra Time, (FI) CLASSIC FM (100.0-101.9MHz FM) 6.00 Michael Fanstone. 8.00 Jamie Crick. 12.00 Alan Mann's African Afters. 2.00 Christmas at St Paul's. 4.00 A Classic Christ-mas Afternoon. 7.00 Classics at Seven. 9.00 Concert. 11.00 Michael Mappin, 2.00 Christma Mark Griffiths. VIRGIN RADIO (1215, 1197-1260kHz MW 105.8MHz FM) 6.00 Jeremy Clark. 10.00 Russ Williams

Family Life. Sybil Rus-

coe chronicles changes

in family life end what

6.00 Richard Allen. WORLD SERVICE RADIO (198kHz LW)
1.00 Newsdesk, 1.30
Smail Worlds, 1.45
Short Story, 2.00 Newsday, 2.30 People and
Politics, 3.00 World News. 3.05 Business Report. 3.15 Sports. 3.30 Science in Action 4.00 Newsdesk. 4.30 Weekend, 5.00 News-day, 5.30 Outlook, 5.55 - 6.00 Spotlight TALK RADIO

Home's Access All

Christmas. 11.00 The Worst of Whale. 2.00 8.00 Gordon Astley.

5.00 - 6.00 Brief Lives at St Paul's. 8.00 - 6.00 2.00 Nick Abbot. 6.00 Wheels of Steel. 11.00 7.00 Russel Grant. 11.00 Nancy Roberts. 3.00 Mike Allen. 7.00 An Audience with Tony Bennett. 8.00 Nicky

SKY PRIMIER
8.00 The Ef Who Didn't Believe (1997) (94922).
8.00 Dis: the Mighty Ducks (1996) (39767). 10.00 Batman and Robin (1997) (13552. 12.00 An American Tail (1986) (97854).
1.30 The Barry Norman Interview (98836). 2.00 First Kid (1996) (47125). 4.00 Dis: the Mighty Ducks (1996) (6689). 8.00 Batman and Robin (1997) (2736). 8.00 Michael (1996) (39106). 10.00 Jerry Maguire (1996) (33785380).
12.20 The Long Kiss Goodnight (1996) (379607).
2.20 The War of the Roses (1999) (186369). 4.20 - 6.00 The Ef Who Didn't Believe (1997) (372997). ve (1997) (372997). SKY MOVIEMAX 6.00 Family Blessings (1996) (64545). 7.30 The

SKY PREMIER

(1996) (84545), 7.30 The Phantom (1996) (76979106). 9.15 The Land before Time 4: Journey through the Mists (1995) (44620583), 11.00 Spicaworld the Movie (1997) (48651), 1.00 The First Wives Club (1996) (22477), 3.00 A Holiday for Love (1996) (22729), 5.00 The Phantom (1996) (53274), 7.00 Spiceworld the Movie (1997) (89449816). the Movie (1997) (89419816). 8.45 The First Wives Club (1996) (50743361). 10.30 (895) 501-6559 Working Girl (1968) (68343854) 12.25 Blue Stael (1990) (814355) 2.10 Set It Off (1996) (66893591) 4.15 - 6.00 Little Miss Miions (1992) (109210). SKY CINEMA 4.00 Going My Way* (1944) (70228167) 645 The Lamon Drop Kid* (1951) (37533903) 8.00 Rebec-ca* (1940) (47295039). 10:15 Plaza Suite (1971) (4640038) 12:00 The Tak-ing of Petham 123 (1974) (6624997) 1.155 None but (654997). 1.55 None but the Lonely Heart* (1944) (8513084). 3.50 Hollywood Hall of Pame (52291572).

4,20 The Two-Headed Spy (1958) (80846152). 5,50 Close(). FILMFOUR 6.00 Koyeanisqatsi (1983) (2835670), 9.00 The Big Blue (1988) (83377767). 10.45 Betty Blue Docu-mentary (1620835). 11.10 Betty Blue (1986) (54491477), 2.15 Subway (1985) (6471684), 3.55 -6.00 Slacker (1991) DISCOVERY CHANNEL

4.00 Rex Hunt's Fishing Adventures (8711090), 4.30 Walker's World (8717274), Adventures (8711090), 4.30
Walker's World (8717274),
5.00 Connections 2 by
James Burke (2717583),
5.30 Jurassica (8731854),
8.00 Animal Doctor
(8738767), 6.30 Ways of
the Wild: Cover Story (Wild
Discovery) (2281380), 7.30
Beyond 2000 (8718903),
8.00 The Christmas Story
(800pm-1200): Mysterious
Man of the Stroud
(5428458), 8.00 History of
the Dead Sea Scrols
(5431922), 10.00 Myths of
Markind: Flood (5441309), Mankind: Flood (5441309). 11.00 On the Trail of the New Testament (5371645 12.00 America Exposed (7625607). 12.30 America Exposed (7657292). 1.00 Connections 2 by James Burke (9551713). 1.30 An-cient Warriors (9807507).

2.00 Close. SKY ONE 8.00 Bump in the Night (86309). 9.00 The Simp-sors (67477). 9.30 Count Duckula (13598). 10.00 What.A-Mess (16818). 10.30 Orson and Ofivia (56361). 11.00 The Other Wise Man (81467). 11.30 Wise Man (81467). 11.30 The Gio Friends Save Christmas (31926). 12.00 Oz Kids in Little Wizard Stories (7094t), 12.30 Oz Klds in Little Wizzard Stories (1353-9, 1.00 Santa and the Desert Children (54564). 1.30 Jingle Bell Rap (63075). 2.00 Santa's First Christmas (1598). 2.30 A Prik Christmas (4729). 3.00 The Queen's Christmas Message (6621477). 3.05 Secret World of Sen ta Claus (7287309). 4.00 Christmas Duckula (8309). 4.30 The Glo Friends Save

Christmas (7293), 5.00 Oz Kids In Little Wizard Stories (4090), 5.30 Oz Kids in Lit-

tle Wizard Stories (8545). 6.00 Santa's First Christ-

mas (5458), **6.30** A Pink

Christmas (9038), 7,00 The Simpsons (4854), 7,30 The Simpsons (8922), 8,00 The

Simpsons (1354), **8.30** Simpsons (3309), **8.00** Sing of the Hil (1294).

9.30 King of the Hil (1609).

10.00 King of the Hil (1609).

10.00 King of the Hil (1609). the Hill (57090), **11.00** Duckman (91458), **11.30** Duckman (32800), **12.00** 7.00 Long Play (9929607).

Sky Sports 1 7.00 Trans World Sport (20372). 8.00 World Wrestling Federation Su-perstars (70831). 9.00 Sky perstars (70831). 9.00 Sky Sports Centre (45903). 10.00 Soccer AM Christ. mas (24361). 12.00 Sports Top 20 (59922). 2.00 What a Weekend (8380). 2.30 Cliff Richard Christmas Pro-celebrity Termis (51361). 3.30 Fishing (20125). 5.30 Soccer AM Christmas Spe-cial (70496). 7.30 Sports Top 20 (98390). 9.30 What a Weekend (35477). 10.00 Cliff Richard Christmas Pro-celebrity Termis (65545). 11.00 (ce Skating World Challenge of Champions (88545). 12.00 Extreme Sports (62864). 1.00 World (60345). 12.00 Extreme Sports (62864). 1.00 World Wresting (55349). 3.00 Fishing (16572). 5.00 -6.00 Christmas Pro-calebrity Tennis (81713). SKY SPORTS 2

7.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (3232090). 7.30 Football League Review (3251125). 6.00 What a Weekend (2116293). 8.30 Futbol Mundral (2115564). 8.00 Fish TV: Martin World Cup 1998 (4436583), **11.00** Cricket (3237545), **12.00** Ciff Richard Celebrity Tennis (3291699). **1.00** ice Skating World Challenge of Champions (3277019), 2.00 H2O (1410923), 2.30 Gillette World Sport Special (9003125). **3.00** Cricket (8532767). **4.00** What a Weekend (9094477). 4.30 Strong Man · Weider Strongman Tournament (4904125), 8.00 Cricket (3280583), 7.00 World Sport (2109039). 7.30 Wild Spirits (9084090). 8.00 Ice Skating World Challenge of Champions (6600019). 9.00 Chcket (6613583)

10.00 Extre

10.00 Extreme Sports (6616670), 11.00 World Sport (8512903), 11.30 in-

v England (8964)25). 2.00 World Sport (50)0862). 2.30 - 7.00 Cricket Austrafia v England (4554713). 5KY SPORTS 3 12.00 Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook

(25783496), 1.30 Trans World Sport (50501564), 2.30 The Rugby Club (87079767), 3.30 Football Leegue Review (936382 4.00 Futbol Mundial (93624019). 4.30 Trans (3002409), 4,30 (rans) World Sport (14878125), 5,30 H2O (93637563), 8,00 Extreme Sports (48878767), 7,00 Fish TV -Tony Dean Outdoors (67506835), 7,30 Fish TV (93614632), 8,00 Super-hiles, Formula Hatthick bikes · Foggy's Hat-trick (65112293). 10.00 World Wrestling Federation Raw (47213748). 12.00 Close. EUROSPORT EUROSPORT
7.30 Xtrem Sports: Yoz
Action (14564). 8,30 Xtrem
Sports (14854). 9,30
Olympic Games (68293).
11.00 Football (92748).
12.00 And They Walked
Away (29816). 1.00
Strength (38564). 2.00
Football (89125). 4.00
Sumo (32729). 9,00 Marbal Arts (3835). 6.00 Fun
Sports (7458). 6.30 Blooo-

hai Arts (3833), 6.00 Fun Sports (7458), 6.30 Bloop-ers (1038), 7.00 Motor Sport (84670), 8.00 Of-froad (80090), 9.00 Bowing (80854), 10.00 Bowing (80854), 10.00 Bowing (83941), 11.00 Xtrem Sports (50011), 12.00 Div-ing (4873), 12.30 Xtrem Sports: Yoz Action (43715), 1.00 Close. UK GOLD

(9337203). **7.30** Neighbours (4264477). **7.55** bours (4264477), 7.55
EastEnders (4671854),
8.30 The Bill (8987274),
9.30 Pride and Prejudice (9076748), 10.30 Angels (8907038), 11.00 Delias (3311748), 11.55 Neighbours (32760699), 12.25
EastEnders (2194748), 100
Pride and Prejudice (7250903), 2.00 Dalias (642187), 2.55 The Bill (6093038), 3.55 EastEnders (9188534), 4.30
Angels (76230670), 4.55

Film: Carry On Christmas: Carry On Abroad (1972) (20787380). 6.45 Only (20/6/38U). 6.45 Cmy Fools and Horses (19818899). 8.30 The Cornedy Alternative: Dad's Army (39564458). 9.50 Carrott's Commercial Breakdown 3 (13552458). 10.55 Men Be-1332938, 10.55 Men Behaving Badly (5510293), 11.55 Only Fools and Horses (8815922, 12.35 Blackader's Christmas Carol (2317888), 1.30 The Bill (9809065), 2.00 The Bill (1082794), 2.30 Live at Incident Carol Carol (1082794), 2.30 Live at Incident Carol Carol (1082794), 2.30 Live at Incident Carol Caro Jongleurs (11148997), 2.55 - 7.00 Shopping with Screenshop (48614607).

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5.00

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LIVING
6.00 Tiny Living
(9396787) 9.00 Christmas
Glory (3047899) 10.00
Filter An American Christmas
Carol (1979) (1622496),
12.00 Filter: Whistle
Down the Wind* (1961)
(7344019) 2.00 Diana: a
Day in the Life (7358212),
3.00 Filter: Wiracle on
34th Street* (1947) 3.00 Films: Miracle on 34th Street* (1947) (1756212) 5.00 Films: Un-ikely Angel (3147380), 7.00 Films: An American Christ-mas Carol (1979) (1402816), 9.00 Jerry Springer Triple Bil (6210038), 11.30 Christ-mas Crackers: the Best of Livings Sen Files* (7353767), 12.00 Close.

8.00 WCW Nitro on TNT (34044496). 11.35 WCW Thunder (57881729). 1.30 Alfred the Great (1969) (36917666). 3.30 The Day They Robbed the Bank of England* (1960) (50492862) **5.00** Close. PARAMOUNT COME-

PARAMOUNT COME-DY CHANNEL 7.00 Clueless (7038) 7.90 Desmond's (3496) 8.00 Rosearne (3456) 8.30 Just Shool Me (5293), 9.00 Cybil (34187), 9.30 Sein feld (33019). 10.00 Films: Purple Rose of Cairo (1985) (47361). 11.30 The Larry 17361). 11.30 The Larry Sanders Show (78212) 12.00 Late Night with David Letterman (82846). 1.00 Taxi (37355). 1.30 The Cribc (42775). 2.00 Dr Katz (21355). 2.30 Seap (82602). 3.00 Hooperman (17591). 3.30 Nightstand (24442). 4.00 Close.

TV-Regions

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CHRISTMAS EVE RADIO

RADIO 1 灣 (97.6-99.8MHz FM) 6.30 Chris Moyles. 9.00 Simon Mayo. 12.00 Kevin Greening. 2.00 The Best Mark & Lard Show in the World. Ever!. 4.00 Dave Pearce. 6.00 Pete Tong's Essentiel Selection. 9.00 Judge Jules. 11.00 Sanctified Dance Party. 1.00 Gilles Peterson. 4.00 -9.00 Emma B.

RADIO 2 (88-90.2MHz FM) 6.00 Alex Lester. 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan. 9.30 Ken Bruce. 12.00 Steve Wright's Christmas Million Sellers. 2.00 Ed Stewart. 5.05 Johnnie Walker. 7.00 Saturday Night Fever. 8-00 Paul Jones. 9.00 Barry Took's Comedy Classics. 9.30 Love 40 - New Balls Please. 10.00 Paul Gambaccini. 11.00 Carols by Candlelight. 11.59 Pause for Thought. 12.00 Katrina Leskanich, 3.00 - 4.00 Mo Dutte.

RADIO 3 (90.2-92.4MHz FM) 6.00 On Air. 9.00 Masterworks. 10.30 Artist of the Week. 12.00 Composer of the Week:

1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Con-2.00 The BBC Orchestras. 4.00 Diva!. 4.45 Music to Die For. 5.00 A Medieval Christmas

5.30 Music Rooms. 6.00 Discovering Music with Leonard Slatkin. 7.00 Christmas Cocktails. 7.30 Performance on 3. Another chance to hear ten of the most memorable concerts of the 1998 BBC Proms season at the Royal Albert Hall, London. 4: Prom 65, given on 6 September, honoured the life and achievement of the lete Sir Michael Tippett with e performance of his oretone 'A Child of Our Time'. Deborah Riedel (sopreno), Nore Gubisch (mezzo), Jerry Hedley (tenor), John Tomlinson

(bass), London Symphony Chorus and Orchestra/Colin Davis. Beethoven, arr Davis/Matthews: String Quartet In E flat, Op 127. Tippett: A Child of Our Time. (R) 9.35 Postscript, Comedian and broadcaster Rainer Hersch

6.00 A Christmas Carol (1984) (48521).

8.00 Angels in the Attic (1997) (33386).

1.45 Angels in the Attic (1997) (518163). 3.45 [1] Be Home for Christmas (1998)

(62786). 7.30 Hollywood Buzz (4231).

9.00 Anna Karenina (1997) (85618). See

Pick of the Day. 10.00 The Frighteners

(1996) (384960), **11.50** Extreme Measures

(1996) (437845). **1.50** Edie & Pen (1996)

(875835). 3.30 · 6.00 Empire Records

6.00 The Night of the Grizzly (1966)

(79950989), 7.45 Miracle on 34th Street

Malaika (1997) (87873), 1.00 Malaika (1997) (93076), 3.00 The Night of the

(1996) (43502). 8.30 El News Week in Re-

(86347). 11.00 Bulletproof (1996) (921892).

12.25 Kissing a Dream (1995) (524903). 2.00 Lurking Fear (1994) (6770361). 3.20 - 6.00 The Rose (1979) (57825699).

4.00 Bringing Up Baby (1938) (7309095).

9.30 Hollywood Hall of Fame (1668298).

See Pick of the Day. 10.00 The Guns of

Nevarone (1961) (26517569), 12.35 The

2.30 The French Connection (1971)

3005075), 4.15 Earth vs the Flying.

Saucers (1956) (53313212), 5.35 Close.

6.00 Une Femme Est Une Femme (1960)

(1996) (4152785), 1.10 Shallow Grave (1994)

4.00 Rex Hunt's Fishing Adventures (8751618). 4.30 Walker's World (8740502).

5.00 Connections 2 by James Burke (2100811), 5.30 Jurassica (8764182), 5.00

Animal Doctor (8761095). 6.30 Living in

Extremes (2221908). 7.30 Beyond 2000 (8741231). 8.00 Science Frontiers: The

iceberg Cometh (54\$1786). 8.00 Wheels and Keels: The Liners (5464250). 10.00

(2875296), 8.00 Walking and Talking (1996) (2847415), 10.00 Miami Pinapsody

(1995) (4317637). 11.40 Trainspotting

Redemption (1994) (28636309).

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

6.00 Father Brown (1954) (9715057). 8.00 Holiday Affair (1949) (2120328).

(1973) (10400502). 9.30 Flipper (1996)

55873). **11.00** Where the Red Fem

Grizzly (1966) (87434), 5.00 Miracle on

34th Street (1973) (66106), 7.00 Floper

view (2540), 9.00 Anaconda (1997)

10.00 The Preacher's Wife (1996) (54724)

12.00 A Christmas Carol (1984) (530095).

SKY PREMIER

(1995) (912380).

SKY CINEMA

FILMFOUR

SKY MOVIEMAX

PICK OF THE DAY

SO FAR AS Radio 4 is concerned, the message of Christmes is all about God, over-eating and end-of-year retrospectives. God is represented today with the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols (3pm R4) live from King's College Chapel in Cambridge (right), and by Midnight Mass from Lichfield Cathedrel (11.30pm R4).

9.55 Fibonacci Sequence. Intro-

F, K370. Beethoven: Ouintet in E

Ilat for piano and wind, Op 16.

10.45 Book, Music and Lyrics.

Cushmen presents a personal

Six programmes in which Robert

original cast recordings - some la-

miliar, some less well known, 3:

12.00 Composer of the Week:

1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night.

9.00 NEWS: In Our Time with

10.00 NEWS: Woman's Hour.

12.00 NEWS; You and Yours.

1.00 The World at One.

1.30 Hidden Treasures.

2.00 NEWS; The Archers.

2.15 Afternoon Play: The Tea-

3.00 NEWS: A Festivel of Nine

Lessons and Carols. See Pick of

9.45 Serial: Scraps with lannucci.

11.00 NEWS; From Our Own Cor-

'Ziegfeld Follies of 1936'.

11.30 Jazz Notes

(92.4-94.6MHz FM)

Melvyn Bragg. 9.30 Carols for Choirs.

RADIO 4

6.00 Today.

11.30 Pollyanna

12.57 Weather.

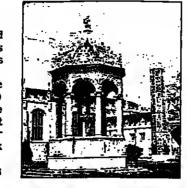
house Detective.

duced by Nicola Heywood

Eeting is represented by e

selection of short food-centred readings called Petits Fours scattered through the schedules between now and Boxing Day. Looking back on '98 are The Vear in Westminster (80m R4) with Boris Johnson and Steve

Richards - nn dnubt taking great pains to avoid mentioning Peter Mandelson's sex life - and Pick of the Year (10pm R4). ROBERT HANKS



presents five personal and idio-4.30 Word of Mouth's Festive syncratic studies of the music of Phrasebook. our century. 4: 'The Rite Stuff', An 5.00 PM. abbreviated guida to the great, the 5.57 Weather good and the ugly musical pre-6.00 Six O'Clock News.

6.30 The Worriers. 7.00 NEWS; The Archers. 7:15 Front Row. Merk Lawson with Thomas. Mozart: Oboe Quartet in a seasonel edition of the arts pro-7.45 Under One Rool. The first of three five-part dramatisations from the Michele Hanson stones. With Janet Maw, Edna Dore and Luisa view of musicals, with songs from

Bradshew-White (4/5). 8.00 NEWS; The Year in Westminster. A special review of the year in which the Blair government came of age. Michael White of the Guardian recalls the policies, the scandals, the personal and political triumphs and defeats, which made up political life in 1998. He discusses the year's main themes with regular presenters Boris Johnson of the Daily Telegreph and Steve Richards of the New Statasman, See Pick of the Day. 9.00 NEWS; Ground Control. The

fast in a four-part series in which Angele Lamont reports on the technology behind some of Britain's biggest civil engineering projects. This week, the Eden Project in Comwall, described as the world's largest greenhouse. 9.30 In Our Time with Melvyn Bregg. Melvyn Bragg and guest discuss ideas and events which have influenced our time. 10.00 NEWS; Pick of the Year. The very best of the year's broadcasting on BBC radio celebrated

for Christmas. Five stare read their chosen seasonel tale. 4: Derek Jacobi reads 'Christmas at Dingley Dell' from 'The Pickwick Papers' by Charles Dickens.

Sands of Time'. In the first of two retrace the steps taken by the Independent set off across the tions of the present age.

12.30 The Late Book: Out of Her 12.48 Shipping Forecast.

5.30 World News. 5.35 Shipping Forecast. 5.40 Inshore Forecast. 5.45 Prayer for the Day. 5.47 - 6.00 Farming Today. **RADIO 4 LW**

(198kHz) 9.45 - 10.00 Daily Service. 12.00 - 12.04 News Headlines; Shipping Forecast, 5.54 - 5.57 Shipping Forecast, RADIO 5 LIVE

by Peter White. See Pick of the

Dey. 10.45 Book at Bedtime: Chosen 11.00 The Modern Magi. 'The

programmes, three modern magi Wise Men almost 2,000 years ago. Rowan Williams, Bishop of Monmouth, Professor Heather Couper, astronomer, and Paul Vallely of the Syrian desert to recreate the atmosphere of this exotic, mystical group and reflect on the aspira-11.30 Midnight Mass. See Pick of

1.00 As World Service.

(693, 909kHz MW) 6.00 Breakfast.

9.00 Brian Haves

INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

CHESS JON SPEELMAN

FOR OUR Christmas competition, defeat in Cazorla in Spain? you're invited to answer questions on chess world events in 1998:

et the days when football matches Part I - Match the Brat Pack were played nn Christmas Dey. Fans talk ebout cutting up the Match the following seven juniors with the echievements listed. Christmes turkey to make sandwiches, the players about having

to miss their children unwrapping 1. Murugan Thiruchelvam presents. With John Motson and 2. Nicholas Pert Gareth Southgate. Presented by 3. Ruth Sheldoo Simon Inglis. 8.00 Inside Edge. Rob Bonnet ex 4. Luke McShane

5. Ruslan Pocomariov plores the legacy of the troubled 6. Darmen Sadvakasov Tour de France, which was rocked by revelations over the use of the 7. Hoang Thanh Trang annad drug EPO.

12.00 The Midday News.

7.30 All Ye Faithful A look back

9.00 Brief Lives. 5 Live's obituary

1.00 Ruscoe and Co.

7.00 News Extra.

4.00 Drive.

CLASSIC FM

(100.0-101.9MHz FM)

VIRGIN RADIO

6.00 Richard Allen.

(198kHz LW)

TALK RADIO

6.00 Nick Bailey. 8.00 Henry

certo. 3.00 Jamie Crick. 7.00

Kelly. 12.00 Requests. 2.00 Con-

Classics at Seven. 9.00 Concert.

11.00 Micheel Mappin. 2.00 Con-

(1215, 1197-1260kHz MW 105.8MHz FM)

6.00 Jeremy Clark, 9.30 Russ

Williams, 1.00 Nick Abbot. 4.00

Harriet Scott. 7.30 John Hipper,

1.00 Newsdesk, 1.30 Composer

2.30 Focus on Feith, 3.00 World

News. 3.05 World Business Re-

port. 3.15 Sports Roundup: the

Best of France '98, 3.30 Assign-

ment. 4.00 - 7.00 World Today.

6.00 Breakfast Show with Sally

Meen. 9.00 Scott Chisholm. 12.00

Lorraine Kelly. 2.00 Anna Raeburn.

4.00 Peter Deeley, 8.00 Mike Allen, 1.00 - 7.00 Gordon Astley.

7.00 Crossroads (6418881), 7.30 Neigh-

(4604182), **8.30** The Bill (8910502), **9.00** The Bill (8934182), **9.30** Middlemarch

bours (4297705). 7.55 EastEnders

(9009076), 10.30 Angels (8930366).

11.00 Dallas (3344076), 11.55 Nelah-

2.00 Dallas (6457415). 2.55 The Bit

EastEnders (5883322). 4.30 Angels

mas: Carry On Camping (1969)

(2127076). 1.00 Middlemarch (7283231).

(2819366), 3.25 The Bill (6026366), 3.55

(76270298). 4.55 Film: Carry On Christ-

of the Month. 2.00 Newsday.

10.00 Jemes Merritt. 1.00 -

WORLD SERVICE RADIO

certo. 3.00 . 6.00 Mark Griffiths

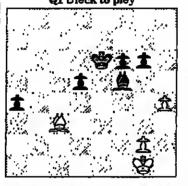
column h) World Girls' champion (under 20) 10.00 20th-Century Vox - Good Time Britain. Sybil Ruscoe goes in search at the different ways that c) World Boys' under-18 champion d) World Junior champion (under 20) 20th-century Britain has given it-

e) Is competing in the Hastings self a good night out. Premier, ebout to start. 11.00 Late Night Live. Incl 10.30 f) Youngest player ever to draw Sports Round-Up. 11.00 News with e grandmaster. Briefing, 11.15 The Finencial World 1.00 Up All Night. g) Beat the same ex-Soviet Grand-4.00 Extra Time (R) master twice in just over a week. 5.00 - 6.00 Brief Lives. (R)

> Part II - Events in 1998 The questions in this section are in chronological order.

e) World Girls' under-18 champioo

Q1 Bleck to pley



1. What did Black now play (see diagram above) - and who is he?

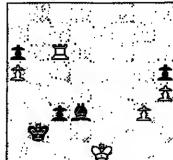
2. e) Whom did the winner of Q1

as a result?

will do fine, but you may amplify) Q3 Bleck to move

h) Whom was he supposed to play

c) What in fact happened? (1 word



3. What did Black play here (see diagram above), and who was it?

4. et Where did eight people have a "balloon debate" for six places last mooth? h) Which Eoglish player, epart

from myself, stayed airborne?

5. Who received "Kosmic" remuneratioo at speed?

The first three correct ectries, drawn at random, will win the excellent new Chessmaster 6000 for PCs using Windows 95 or 98. The oext five will win the British Chess Federatioo book of the year, Vishy Anand'e Best Gomes (Gamhit, £15.99), which have been kindly donated by the BCM Chess Shop (0171-603-2877) in Kensingtoo.

Seod your eotries to Jon Speelman, c/o Features. The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, Londoo E145DL - or e-mail to jspeelman@compuserve.com to arrive by Friday 8 January 1999. Results will be announced oo Mooday 18 January.

POKER DAVID SPANIER

HOW MANY times do you get a the river, to give him a full house. straight flush in e lifetime of poker? It's e rare event. But I had two last week.

The first occurred in a low-level game of Omaha (the four-card version of Hold 'em) at the oewly reopeoed Grosvenor Victoria. Sitting on the big blind I found Ah 9c 7c 5s, - a tolerable starting hand, if there is oo risk of a raise behind you. Three callers ahead of me.

The flop came down Jc 10c 6s which gave me four to a flush. In Omaha, if you haveo't got an ace high flush to draw to, or et least the king, this is a high-risk hand, which you almost don't want to hit. So when someooe bet £10, I was inclined to fold.

But theo I ooticed I had an inside draw to e straight flush. OK, for a tenner. I don't mind taking e long shot, so I called it. And to my astonishment, down came the 8c. like e piece of confetti, to fill my straight flush. Neturally, I checked it. The player who had bet oo the flop, checked along. I did oot know what he had in his hand, but as sure as heil he knew I had a flush. I was

hoping the board would pair up oo

No.3802 Thursday 24 December

But down came a blank. If I had bet, he would have folded, so I checked again. Assuming it was his pot, he mumbled an epology: "I had trip sixes on the flop, doo't know why I didn't bet 'em."

I spread my straight flush, without comment. This incideot served to remind me of the old truth about poker: there is oo such thing as good hands, only good situations

The other occasion I hit a straight flush was in a jolly local game, where everyooe bets it up regardless, for the sheer fun of gambling. In a variation called Big Cross, players get five cards in their hand and nine cards laid out in the shape of e cross. You have to use two from your hand with three others from either line of the cross - you know the sort of thing!

Just to make sure it's not boring, each player has the option of changing one card from his hand at the eod of the hetting. This time I hit a straight flush in diamoods, against a full house. Split between the high and the low hands, as such pots usually are. I cleared all nf 32 quid. Heigh-ho.

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

He smoulders to similar effect in the satellite premiere of Leo Vroosky, the aristocrat with whom the wealthy Anna (Sophie Marceau) starts e passionate,

AN ACTOR habitually described but ultimately doomed affair. as "lean and mean", Sean Bean Anthony Quinn once recalled right) has cornered the market Hollywood's initial reaction to in strong, silent types (in that him: "they said all I was good for respect, playing Mellors in the was playing Indians." He sooo BBC version of Lady Chatterley's proved them wroog, carving out Lover did him oo end of good). a highly successful career in a wide range of roles stretching from his Oscar-winning display Tolstoy's Anna Karenina (8pm in Lust for Life to Zorba the Sky Premier). He plays Count Greek. He is the subject of tonight's Hollywood Hall of Fame (9.30pm Sky Cinema). JAMES RAMPTON



Intensive Care: The Problem with Men (5474637). 1LOO Forensic Detectives (6218683) 12.00 Intensive Care: The Problem with Men (1125651). 1.00 Conections 2 by James Burke (9657941). 1.30-2.00 Ancient Warriors (9903835).

8.00 Games World (4241163), 8.15 Games World (4231786), 8.30 Street Sharks (22637). 9.00 The Simpsons (13989), 9.30 Earthworm Jim (41250). 10.00 Hercules - the Legendary Journeys (31724). 11.00 The New Adventures of Superman (11960). 12.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show (8437873). 12.55 The Special K Collection (53558908). 1.00 Days of Our Lives (9518182). 1.55 The Special K Collection (77860095). 2.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (6344989). 2.55 The Special K Collection (2343144). 3.00 Jenny Jones (7211366). 3.55 The Special K Collection (8874892), 4.00 Best of Guilty! (62279). **5.00** Star Trek (8960). **6.00** Married with Children (8057). **6.30** Dream Team (2637). 7.00 The Simpsons Christmas Special (6989). 7.30 The Simpsons (1521), 8.00 Friends (5637), 8.30 Friends (32502), 10.00 E R (71415), 11.00 Dream Team (63908). 11.30 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (83618). 12.30 Highlander (66651). 1.30 - 8.00 Long Play (6710729). SKY SPORTS 1 7.00 Sky Sports Centre (8010811). 7:15 World Wrestling Federation Shot Gun

(359927). **8.35** Sky Sports Centre (8261502). **8.30** Table Football (98569). **8.00** Aerobics - Oz Style (72521). **9.30** Figure Skating (34415). 11.30 Unbeliev able Sports (89960), 12,00 Aerobics - Oz Style (69057). 12.30 Superstars (33434). 2.30 Superbikes - Foggy's Hat-trick (13095). 4.30 Table Football (2298). 5.00 ing (8502). 6.00 Sky Sports Centre (93502), 7.00 Football Review (9231). 7.30 What e Weekend (3927). 8.00 Futbol Mundial (5279). 8.30 Strongman Welder Strongman Tournament (33786). 10.00 Sky Sports Centre (37095). 11.00 What a Weekend (20340). 11.30 Futbol Mundial (36705). 12.00 ice Skating World Challenge of Champions (21496). 1.00 Trans World Sport (86962). 2.00 What a Weekend (35835). 2.30 Futbol Mundial (47670). 3J00 The Rugby Club (81748).

4.00 Sports Centre (38831). 5.00 Close. SKY SPORTS 2 7.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (3272618). 7.30 Sky Sports Centre (5591908). 7.45 Water-sports World (6185144). 8.45 Sky Sports Centre (6296298). 9.00 Fish TV Fishing Centre (6265296) 9.00 Fish TV Fishing Texas (2139144) 9.30 Fish TV Americana Outdoors (3201076) 10.00 Golf Extra (7129837) 1.00 be Skating World Chal-lenge of Champions (3200347) 2.00 Table Footbal (9908291) 2.30 World Windsurfing (9036453) 3.00 Watersports World (8265005) 4.00 Survival of the World (8565095). 4.00 Survival of the Fittest (9027705). 4.30 Unbelievable Sports (9023989). 5.00 Football League Review (2204683), 5.30 Futbol Mundial

(9047569), 9.00 What a Weekend (903782) 6.30 The Rugby Club (6508502) 7.30 Survival of the Fittest (9024618) 8.00 Ice Skating World Chalenge of Champions (6633347). 9.00 Trans World Sport (5646818, 10.00 Fishing (8564366). 12.00 Strong Man - Weider Strongman Tournament (1210106). 1.30 The Rugby Club (1145564), 2.30 Sky Sports Centre (6192090), 3,30 Close SKY SPORTS 3 12.00 World Wrestling (48805811). 1.00

Fish TV Fishing Texas (94070144), 1.30 Fish TV Americana Outdoors (48892347). 2.00 Olympics: Golden Moments (67535347). 2.30 Sky Sports Classics Snooker - 1996 British Open Final (87002095). 3.30 Dancing IDSF World Latin (40064811). 4.30 Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Superstars (60479057). 6.30 Survival of the Fittest (93658076). 7.00 Fish TV (94091637). 9.00 The Rugby Club (65161569). 10.00 Football Scrapbook (56600453). 11.30 Close. EUROSPORT

7.30 Xtrem Sports: Yoz Action (53786) 8.30 Xtrem Sports (53076), 9.30 Olympic Games (61665), 11.00 Football: World Cup Legends (66434). 12,00 Karting (99786). 1,00 Strength (51714). 2,00 Trick-shot (28347). 4,00 Sumo (70609). 5,00 Roller Skating (78637). 6.30 Four-Wheel Drive (2811). 7.00 Football (58415). 8.00 Boxing (29076). 10.00 Bowling (22163). 11.00-1.00 Clympic Games (33637).

(20727908). 6.45 Christmas Comedy Altemative: Only Fools and Horses (10028724). 8.20 Dad's Army (7190250). 9.00 One Foot in the Grave (5890434). 9.40 Men Behaving Badiv (7758502). 10.20 Bottom (5418250). 11.00 The Bill (3324502). 11.30 The Bill (1032928). 12.00 Film: The Eiger Sanction (1975) (46882651). 2.45 Sight and Sound in Concert (1268835). 2.55 - 7.00 Shopping with Screenshop (48710835). LIVING 6.00 Tiny Living (9329095). 9.00 The

Roseanne Show (4122521), 9.50 The Jerry Springer Show (5967724), 10,40 Michael Cole (3178182). 11.30 Brookside (1005434). 12.00 Ready, Steady, Cook (3166415). 12.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (1646076). (1979) (7378076). 3.00 Films: The Song of Bernadette (1943) (8933502). 6.00 Christmas Glory (1654095). 7.00 Film: Miracle on 34th Street (1947) (1435144). 9.00 Film: Educating Fita (1983) (9717415). 11.00 Christmas Crackers: the Best of Living's 'Sex Files' (1431328), 12.00 Clase.

8.00 The Wizard of Oz (1939) (65142434). **1LOO** Meet Me in St Louis (1944) (51193434). 1.00 A Christmas Carol (1938) (39002496), 2.45 The Naked Spur (1953) (39702496), 3.45 Mad Love (1935) (85827019). 5.00 Close. PARAMOUNT COMEDY CHANNEL

7.00 Clueless (7873). 7.30 Desmond's (1569), 8.00 Roseanne (6521), 9.30 Just Shoot Me (2328). 9.00 Cybill (70827). 9.30 Seinfeld (29649), 10,00 Fra 10.30 Cheers (77076). 11.00 Festival of Fun I (20322), 1L30 The Larry Sanders Show (34347), 12,00 Late Night with David Letterman (29038). 1.00 Taxi (55583). 1.30 The Critic (67816), 2.00 Dr Katz (33477). (42019), 3.30-4.00 Nohtstand (36564).

REGIONAL TELEVISION VARIATIONS

As Cariton except: 12.20 Anglia News and Weather (8841279), 1.00 Di-nosaurs: Domesticated dinosaur sitcom. Earl's sister comes to town (97366), 4.00 he latest live-action comedy block-ter, starring Eddie Murphy as the man who can speak to animals (434) 4.30
Anglia News and Weather (618) 3.50
Firm: Echo of Diana: Betty McDowall
searches for missing husband 0 armot
Walsh. Dreary British espionage B-feature from barrel-scraping poverty row mer-chants Butchers (6055545). 4.50 Sound-trax: Musicians talk about their work (93440729), **5.10** Hurricanes: Animated adventure featuring the Hurricanes, a football team who play in the world's first international football league (2697309).

As Cariton except: 9.25 ITN News Headines (4219366). 9.30 Central News (500434). 12.20 Central News and ather (6641279). 12.30 ITN News; Waather (48732). 4.00 Premiere: A lively guide to whet's on in the Central region, covering music, movies, art and theatre (434), 4.30 Central News and Weather (618).

As Caritton except: 12.20 HTV
News (6641279). 1.00 Shortland Street:
Team spirit saves the day. Nick plays
Dick. Manny has second thoughts
(97365). 4.00 Dinosaurs (9849076).
4.25 Wales Tonight: The latest news
from across Wales (5365873).
3.50 Film: Echn of Diana (6055545). 4.50 Soundtrax (93440729). 5.10 Hurri-canes (2697309).

HTV WEST
As HTV Wales except: 4.25 Warner Brothers Cartoon (1044837). 4.40
HTV News (2421231).

MERIDIAN
As Cariton except: 10.50 Fim:
The Snow Queen: Feature-length animated version of the classic Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, featuring the volces of Helen Mirren, David Jason, the basis of Big. Hugh Laurie, Julia McKenzia and Rik Mayali. In an ordinary house, in an ordi-nary town, Tom and Ellie live with their little sister and grandmother leading or-dinary lives. But this is soon to change as, fer away in her vast, frozen palace of ice, the Snow Queen plots to rule the world (5190182). 12.15 Meridian News and Weether (3335415). 1.00 Hope and

Gioria (97366). **4.00** Country Ways Christmas Special: A short film about the countryside of Southern Englandits wildlife, its natural history, its crafts and its people (434). **4.30** Meridian Toright (616). **3.50** Film: Echo of Diana (6055545). **4.50** Soundtrax (93440729). **5.10** Hurricanes (2697309).

WESTCOUNTRY

As Cariton except: 10.50 Fim: The Snow Queen (\$190182), 12.35 Westcountry News (3335415), 12.27 Carols for Christ-mas: Bramdean School Choir from Exeter sings a selection of carols (6659296). 1.00 gies apart, and Biff gets angry about Kethy and Chris (97366). 4.00 Beadle's Hot Shots: Jeremy Beadle presents view ers' TV parodies and sketches, all made on their own carncorders (434). 4.30 stcountry Live: A round-up of news and views from across the West Country, and views from across the West Country, presented by Allson Johns and Richard Bath. There's also a look at weather, sport and leisure in the region, and a guide to all the happenings on stage and screen over the next seven days in What's On West' (519, 3.50 Fam: Echo of Diana (6055545). 4.50 Soundirax (93440729). 5.10 Hurricanes (2597309). YORKSHERE As Cariton except: 12.20 Calendar

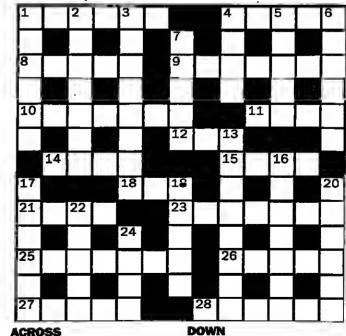
As Canton except: 12.20 Calendar News and Weather (864127) 1.00 Emmerdale (97366). 4.00 Calendar/Tonight Xmas Eve Special: Join Christa Ackroyd, Mike Morris and Christine Taibot for an hour of festive tun as they take a look at Christmases past and present. With music from the Ampleforth Choir and Jane McDonald (5368) TYNE TEES As Yorkshine except: 12.20 North East News and Weather (6641279). 4.00 North East News (6889683). 4.90 Cu-tains Up for Christmas: Pam Royle hosts

this musical celebration of Christmas from Newcastie's Telewest Arana. She is joined by four thousand children from schools around the region and a host of calebrity ests, including Beverley Craven, Carta ney and Shay Given (3218182).

As Channel 4 except: 12.35 Planed Plant (90213386). 1.35 The Bear's Tale (63506908). 4.30 Planed Plant: Catrin. Lowri and Bedwyr present Plant: Caurit, Lown and bedwyr present tha popular children's magazine pro-gramme. In this edition, Gair am Aur lau - the youth quiz programme - and Uned 5 (42770144). 6.00 Newyddion (19615415). 6.05 Heno: Daily magazine show from Llanelli (49907366). 7.00 Film: Porc Pel: Engaging drama about the trials and tribulations rit a young man who creates hevoc wherever he goes. In this yam, he plays in the local brass band and impersonates a famous surgeon (21591521). 8.00 Gwyl y Baban (25852144). 8.45 Melbion Glandwr: Drama series by Twm Miall and Ellir Jones. Although the job of sandtexing Mr Hargreaver's house is a bonus, Wil suspects reave's house is a bonus, Wil suspects there is trouble afoot (71663076) 9.15. Newyddion (46243144) 9.30 Tua Bethhem (69909237). 18.00 Friends: First episode of the sitcom about six New York twentysomethings which includes some previously unseen footage, includ-ing a completion of bloopers and gattes, plus a song by Phoebe (21590892). 11.00 Snow Graham Nor-ton: Cornectian Graham Norton present a spontaneous and over-the-top Christ-

mas celebration. Guests including La-Toya Jackson join him under the tree as he explores the worlds of glove puppets and Furnoean sex lines (5374372) and European Schristmas (Schristza). 11.40 Harry Hilfs Christmas Sleigh Ride (75798788). 12.10 Bob and Margaret (83415748). 12.40 Film: Exclusive (93635922). 2.25 Close.

CONCISE CROSSWORD



ACROSS With a crew (o)

Assuage (5) Right-hand page (5) Front looth (7)

Enter uninvited (7) Leading role (4) Bag (anatom.) (3) 14 Cathedral dignitary (4) 15 Solemn vow (4)

18 Bill (3) 21 Press (4) 23 Greed (7) 25 Forceful (7)

26 Duhiety (5) 28 EU country (6)

27 Man-made fibre (5)

Solution to vesterday's Concise Crossword: ACROSS: 1 Arras, 4 Meant (Harassment), 10 Arduous, 11 Aspen, 12 Hurry, 13 Aseptic, 15 Take, 17 Xeber, 19 Abeam, 22 Robe, 25 Buckled, 27 Able, 29 Newly, 30 Undress, 31 Myrrh, 32 Idyll, DOWN: 2 Radar, 3 Acolyte, 5 Erase, 6 Naphtha, 7 Cache, 8 Usual, 9 Knack, 14 Scab, 16 Acre, 18 Each way, 20 Bearded, 21 Ebony, 23 Odour, 24 Deism, 26 Layer, 28

Migratory bird (6)

Of fluent speech (8)

Strong-scented plant (6)

Sew with loose stitches (5)

Item of wear (7)

Cotton fabric (5)

13 Perforated utensil (8)

Cunning (4)

16 Homage (7)

20 Middle (6)

22 Kudos (5)

24 Incline (4)

17 Musical nnte (6)

2 1 2 d Co to

A CONTROL OF THE STATE OF THE S



prising documentary series ecent years. The premise simple. Our man Louis n of Faul, if you didn't lunow) and some quality timo in the TELEVISION REVIEW

ended them, cajoled them by for the benefit of the crs at home, and hinted at juman warmth that led somewhere within all led. For instance, behind a cd-wire fence somewhere a Midwest he

nuntered a gun-totin' white remacist, who wanted to blacks, Jews and gays and off the face of the earth, also turned out to be a big of Are You Being Served? r Louis Theronx's Weird Istmas (BBC2), he rned their hospitality.

There were even weirder things going down on 100 Per Cent Guide to Sex (C5), a special edition of the daily quiz that kept its attention fixed firmly below the belt. The proliferation of quiz shows on daytime TV has led to a shortage of good hosts. The BBC has even brought Fred Dineage from How! out of efficement to front one of their reary juncibitine efforts. 100% olves this problem by not a writing a host at eil, just a nysterious voice which poses a eries of multiple choice uestions. Ostensibly, it's a), b) r. c), but in reality cr is usually dierov for a series of second for seven down for a series of multiple choice uestions. Ostensibly, it's a), b) r. c), but in reality cr is usually dierov for a series of ser

messagee from the

oat," he protested, mentarily forgetting the tails of his day job). Randy of problems with being osked u might expect, there or might expect, there a few tensions. JJ had a am with Randy's goggle-halletujah-ing ("I don't lings shoved down.my i up as Father
has (or "Satan Claws",
has (or "Satan Claws",
heisted on calling him).
Short had problems
hig Korton the extratal (judging by the
dinary gurgling noises
dinary gurgling noises
dinary gurglink-up). And
we psychlo link-up). And
had problems keeping a
face as the Reverend
Korton's responses in fertility "
the title role in Emmanueue,
and that Viagra wee not
produced in the Irish town of
Gotasiffy. Unfortunately,
Caroline fhought that It was
Shere Cliff who compiled a
Shere cliff who compiled a
""" vey of sexual attitudes, end
""" vey of sexual attitudes, end
""" of them

If you smell gas call 0800 111 999

HENDELL MYSTERIES (9.30pm 8BC1, right): THE RUTH RENDELL MYSTERIES (9.30pm ITV) The popular channels are running head-to-head with full-length whodwantis this evening. BBC1's Jonothon Creek has the edge thanks to its cast—connedian-of-the-moment Alan Davies as the magician's assistant with a knack of solving "bocked-room mysteries", and Caroline Quentin as the journalist sidekick who keeps him grounded. They're joined by Rik Mayall as an unlikely police detective investigating the apparently impossible death of a female illustonist. Ted Whitehead has scripted Ruth Rendeil Mysteries on ITV, about a pair of odd-conple flatmates.

Transco

Christmas.

WHODUNNITS OF THE DAY

MATTHEW SWEET

however, there was an uneasy accord botween all parties, who accused no more bonkers than the New Yorksus to whom they were introduced on their trip. True, Randy sulked in the doormobile as JJ took part in n porn shoot on the banks of the Hudson. But his diespproval was more than made up for by Mike's poorly concealed enthusias m. I guess a man geta lonely living underground in the woods with only the concys and his rifle for company. Christmas Day liself went quite well - once Randy had decided that instead of yelling about which of the guesis was most likely to burn in the everiasting flames of Hell, he'd just leave the room when something he disliked atarted to happen. The Therovian Christmas message was that if these guys could get on, we shouldn't have too much trouble. However, we didn't see the arguments about who was

100

9.30 [9][0][6] Jonathan Creek. "Black Canary". Rik Mayall Joins Alan Davies and Caroline Quentin for this one-off mystery. See Whodurnits of the Day. below (S) (T) (55837). 9:10 News; Regional News; Wasther (T) (866250).

11.40 Christmas is Coming. Candle-lit carols from St Gliee Cathedral in Edinburgh (S) (812502):

12.40 IIIM Cerry On Again, Doctor (Gereid Thomas 1969 UK). British GP Jim Dale stumbles upon a potentially lucrative witch-doctor's weight-reducing potion while working in the South Seas. With Kenneth Willams, Sid James, Charles Hawtrey and the rest (Followed by Weether) (7493835). To 2:10am. 12.40 [][M] The Haunting (Robert Western Street in a Vision Street in

BBC1

7.00

10.30 IIIM All I Want for Christmas (Robert Lieberns 1981 US). A gid whose mother is about to remarry aska Sente to reunite her divorced parents in this fairytele for the poet-nuclear dysfunctional family (5771328).

1.35 (1)(M) Lassie: a New Generation (Daniel Petrie 1664 US) (S) (T) (7728647). **New Adventures of Superman** (8166415), 5 Good Neighboure (73736366), **12.55** News; ner (36279669). **1.10** Neighbours (5) (T) (58647057)

3.45 IIIM The Senta Clause (John Pasquin 1964 US).
Divorced father Tim Allen must compete for his son's
affections with the boy's new stepfether (S) (T) (181873).
5.15 Neighbours (S) (T) (8734502). 3.05 Live and Kicking Mystory Toons (S) (5570231)

5.40 Whatever You Want tor Christmas. Soneonol edition of "Gaby"i Fix if", with La Roslin making wish

News; Weathar; Regional News (T) (845).

Cslebrity Ready, 6tsady, Cook. Barbara Windsor and Lily Savage buy fhe ingrediente for Ainsley Harriott and Antony Worrall Thompson (S) (T) (6347).

7.30 EastEnders. Grant's Ireedom Is In the balance as Tiffany gives her version of what heppened on the stairs in the ongoing baluefrade-hanger (S) (T) (279).

8.00 Animal Hospital. The emergency services atfempt to rescue a cat with his head etuck between two cupboards on a canal boaf (S) (T) (5065).

6.30 Birds of a Feather. Continuing the final series (always a dodey fime for sitcome). Sharon and Tracey pay a vielt to Ireland to attend the reading of a will as Dorlen tags along to meet her latest purchase, an irish racehorse (S) (T) (366328).

8.40 Dear John -Affectionate pre

9.30 RT01014 The Search for Shangri-la. Fascineting travelogue documenting historian Charles Alisn's attempts to prove the existence of the mythical ancient paradise of Shangri-le (S) (T) (644521).

10.30 The Moonstone. Yet enother chance to see (it's almost become a modern ecesonal staple) Kevin Elyot's adeptation of Wilkle Colline's classic detective etery. 0.20 Meetings with Remarkable Trees (R) (158106). ive etory. late a

(Robert Wise 1963 US), Hugery It in a Victorian gothio pile in ly designed building which left. Julie Herfs, Claire Bloom, is Tamblyn ere among psychic investigete a eupposed by Weatherview) (T) (256090).

BBC2

9.15 THAT One Maglo Christmas (Philip Borsos 1965 US). Capra-esque corn (S) (6690616).

10.40 ITIMI To Have end Have Not (Howerd Hawks 1944 US). Humphrey Bogart pieys the cynical neutral who must decide whether to join the Free French in Martinique. The magic in thie post Cesablance Hemingway adaptation was supplied by Lauren Bacall's saxy movie debut. She end Bogart ist in love on set (45857499).

12.20 Rex the Runt (6647453). 12.40 The West (7728618) 3.45 Choir of the Year (S) (T) (4500368), 4.25 Carols from King's (S) (2280298). 5.40 The Simpsons (517705) 2.05 [][M] Shenendoah (Andrew V McLaglen 1965 US).
Jamee Stewert in superior US Civil War tele (T) (866415)

6.15 The 6Impsons. After being stopped for drink-driving. Homer tries to give up beer for 30 days (R) (900662).

8.30 Hssrtbeat. The soft-focus Sixties bobby series would have had its seasonal epecial on Christmas Day in the glory Nick Berry years, so this is something of a demotion. A pregnant woman fears for her baby after a sarias of ghostly events lead her to believe her house is hauntad, and the Craddocks and Boltons fight it out at the Christmas cherity dance (S) (T) (54453).

Can't Be Too Careful. Serena Evans and Jane Hezlegrove play odd-couple flatmetes in this psychological thriller. See Whodunnits of the Day, below sychologicat thri (S) (T) (6063347).

38 ITN News | Waether (T) (737660).

60 This is Caline Dion. Behind-the-scenes look at the Canadian singer's sell-out tour of 1697, with footage from en appearance in Memphis, Tanneseee (T) (331827).

30 [21] Briet Encounter (David Leen 1945 UK).
Respectable, buttoned up and married (to other people)
Cella Johnson and Trevor Howerd meet on a train and
fell so, so in love in this classic love abory (326854).

7.35 1111 Key Large (John Huston 1848 US).
Diellueloned war vetsran retires to Florida Ke 6.10 [] Modern Times (Charlie Cheplin 1836 US). Chaplin's final masterpiece of "slient" (It uses the background sounds of machinary) comedy (7847182).

6.08 Rex the Runt (S) (T) (27/892).

6.35 G:[4][N] It's a Wondertul Lite (Frank Cepro 1948 US). Capra's seasonal clessic with suictdel Jernss

OO Emmsrdele. Liea struggles to reunite the Dingles for Christmas, and Andy is bleckmalled away from the Sugdens (S) (T) (1415).

The Bitt. Arsane's French mtdfielder Emmanuel Petif has been injured of late, which gave him the opportunity to do e spot ol gueet-sterring in the Christmas episode of the revitatised plod soap. He plays himself, paying a hospital visit to a little girl knocked down in a hit-and-run incident (T) (8981).

30 Christmas Gfory. Princese Anne introduces music from St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle (T) (43989).

Christmas on Division 6treet (George Kaczender 1991 US). Youth befriends a homalese man he meets at the public library (264060). To 3.50am.

00 GMTV (1989637). **9.25** ITN News Headlinee (4200618).

.50 [III] The Snow Queen (Chris Randall 1965 UK). Feeture-length animated version of the claseic Hane Christian Andersen fairytale, featuring the voices of Helen Mirren, David Jeson, Hugh Laurle, Julia McKenzle end Rik Mayall (S) (T) (5763540).

Your Shout (6641279), 12.30 News; Weather (T) (48732). 1.00 The Baidy Man (97366). 1.30 Cheriotte Church – In Her Own Worde (88273).

15 IIII Sister Act 2: Beck in the Hebit (Bill Duke 1993 US). The original Sister Act movie was an amusing comedy about a lourge singer (Whoopi Goldberg) on the run froin her mobstsr boyfriend, dreeeing se a nun end hiding out in a convent. Goldberg's manic performance (nicely counterpointed by Maggie Smith's Mother Superior) made the movie end it proved to be box-office dynemits. This hevitabia and needlass sequel te mainly an exercise in cashing-in (S) (T) (23604692).

8,30

9.00 Rising Damp. Rigeby is facing the prospect of a lonely Christmes, until Alan end Philip arrive unexpectedly (R) (T) (7434).

10.38 Snow Greham Norton. Guests including Latoya Jackson, as Norton explores the worlds of glove puppets and European sex lines (562750).

12.10 ITIM Black Christmas (Bob Clark 1975 US).
Chennel 4 sees in Christmas Day with a trio of aboveaverage horror movies. Who's killing college girls? (741583).

3.50 [][M] House of Wax (André De Toth 1653 US). Vincent Price again, se e med eculptor (5053167). To 5.25am

FILM OF THE DAY

Children's ITV: Tiny Toon Advantures (A) (S) (T) (187881). 10.00 Rocky and the Dodos (A) (3262502). 10.15 Art Atteck Christmes Cracker (R) (S) (2807250).

Children's ITV: Peddington (77737328), 2.10
Animaniacs (T) (17058927), 2.35 Hey Arnoldi (T)
(8729340), 3.00 in the House with Cleopafra... end
Friends (T) (1873), 4.00 Animal SOS (S) (434), 4.30
London Tonight (518), 5.00 News; Weather (3616182)

700

8.00 Burnt Bits. Compliation of TV cookery mishaps including Airsiey Harriotts briel moment of speechlessness, end Brian Turner's exploding piping bag (T) (8705).

The Christmas Italian Kitchen. It's way too late for you fo go out and do any of this, ot couras, but here are Italian alternatives to Christmas pudding (T) (7340).

30 Father Ted Chriatmas Special. Another chance to see last years festive one-off. Ted. Dougal and elx other priests take a wrong turn during e shopping trip and find themselves lost in a lingerle department. However, Ted's quick thinking saves the dey (R) (S) (T) (6061989).

2.00 IIIM Theatre of Blood (Douglas Hickox 1973 US). Villifled classicel actor Vincenf Price revenges himself on eight drama critics. A terrific cast includes Diane Rigo, Harry Andrews and Michael Hordern (T) (939038). 11.15 David Bjeine's Street Wagic (T) (561231). Carlton

7,00

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THURSDAY REVIEW
The Independent 24 December 1998

DO For Better tor Worse (96637). 7.30 The Magic Keeper (75144). 8.00 The Big Breakfast (S) (T) (40960). 10.00 Buzz (50347). 10.30 Earle, Indiana (S) (T) (6826724). 10.55 The Secret World of Alex Mack (F) (S) (4165368). 11.30 Moesha (S) (T) (8927). 12.00 Medison (6646637). 12.35 Ted Hughes: In His Own Words (R) (4406231). 1.05 The Real Netwify Show (R) (4640426).

8.00 The Wind in the Willows (R) (25772453). 6.20
Rooberb (R) (32771724). 6.30 Dappledown Farm (R)
(445908). 7.00 Wimzle's House (R) (S) (6667095). 7.30
Milkshakef (S) (2426095). 7.35 Havekazzo (6098298).
8.00 George of the Jungle (R) (7492250). 6.30 What a Mess (7491521). 9.00 Loggerheads (R) (7482873). 9.30
USA High (2D1223). 10.00 The Gods of Olympus (9974908). 10.20 Sunset Beach (5695219). 1110 Leeza (8384927). 11.55 Russell Grent's Postcards (99856637).
12.00 5 News at Noon (7402637). 12.30 Family Affairs (2023347). 1.00 The Bold and the Beeufitul (8886366).

2.08 [IIII] Annis (John Huston 1982 US). A John Huston musical? Well, quite, At \$60 million (not much of which seems to have landed on the ecreen), this is e strangely disengaged affair, thenks to eome choppy soliting and medicare songs. Carot Burnett is the mosf eya-cetching charecter, as the orphanage head, while a sheven Albert Finnsy pleys the billionaire Daddy Warbucks (65799095).

4.30 The 6nowman. The first of two Raymond Briggs animations. Followed by... (R) (S) (T) (960).

5.00 The Bear. Raymond Briggs' new one, shout e zoo bear who takes up residence with e fittle girl, Features the voice of 12-year-old "chart sensetion" Charlotte Church (T) (2521).

6.00 A Perfect Carry On. Berbara Windsor celebrates 40 years of Carry On movies, along with "connoleseure" Janet Sireet-Porter, Dale Winton, Malcolm Bradbury, Richard O'Brien end Philip Dodd (R) (T) (13453). 5.30 Countdown (S) (T) (540).

8.00

100 Per Cent. The game show without a host (S) (2238637).

6.30 Family Attairs. Annie is turious when she finds a drunken Chris dancing with Sadie. And so it goes on (T) (7567540).

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7.10 Project Orizzly. Documentery about a man who invented a baar-proot suit after being attacked by a grizzly (T) (6419778).

3.40 IZITA The Adventures of Baron Munchausen (Terry Gillem 1989 US). Lavish, occasionally inspired, but generally disappointing fantasy epic about the 18th-century fabulist. With John Neville, Eric Idle, Oliver Reed, Uma Thurman and Sting (S) (95088908).

1.50 IIII A Ditterent Kind ot Christmas (Tom McLsughlin 1996 US). Yet enother reworking ot A Christmas Cero!, with Shelley Long as a meen-epirit

www.raa.cerus, with shelley Long as a meen-epirited awysr discovering the spirit of the sesson when she neets a troublesoms Santa (S) (f) (81928766).

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Harces ot Camedy: Tony Harcock. Another chence to see this fribute to the troubled comic genius who died in Australia in 1968. Peul Merton, Peter Hall, Steve Coogen, John Junkin end June Whittield are emong the admirers, old triends and colleaguee (R) (S) (T) (7163).

6.10 Xens: Werrior Princess. Responding to an urgent messaga from King Lles, Xens decidse to go away for e few days, leaving Gabrielle end Joxer behind. That may seem significant to eomeone. You never know (S) (2865827).

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9.00 IIII Behind Closed Doora (Cofherine Cyran 1884 US). Chiller about a man (Barry Bostwick) who murdere his wheelchall-bound wifa (a pre-Sunset Beach Lealey-Anne Down) with the halp of her etapdaughter, with whom he is having an affair. Soon he begins to hear etrenge noises and receive mysterious telephone calls in the middle of the night. Is he losing his senity, or is someona trying to drive him insane? If you're not even slightly interested, then at least look out for Lisa (tudrow in e pre-Friends appearance (S) (T) (38529057).

10.50 Melinde's Big Night tn. La Measenger's gueste tonight are Mark Lemarr, Steven Houghton, Mr C and The Shamen (S) (2759/63).

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11.30 Stags end Hens (R) (S) (T) (79/3786).

12.30 IIIM Faster, Puasycati Killi Killi (Russ Meyer 1965 US). The firet in e season of Russ Meyer movies, which Channel 5 has probably bought for their pornogrephic interset, although they are also omusing in e mad sort of way (S) (2033729).

IIIM The High Price of Pession (Larry Elikann 1686 US). A college professor is driven to murder by his infatuation with a hooker (S) (7745870). To 3.50am. TELLVISION GUIDE OF GERARD GILBERT

"Doggerel Itying to pass as art", was Paulinc Kael's harsh assessment of Frank Capra's sessonal evergreen. If you've never seen it in which case correct that omission at once, James Stewart is the smelltown stolwart who feels he has wasted his life running the family sevinge and loan bank when he could have got an education end seen the world. Contemplating suicide, he is taken in hand by his guardien angel (Henry Travers), who shows him what life would have been like had he never heen horn. Expertly crafted and hugely sentimental, BBC2 has scheduled it to perfection.

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